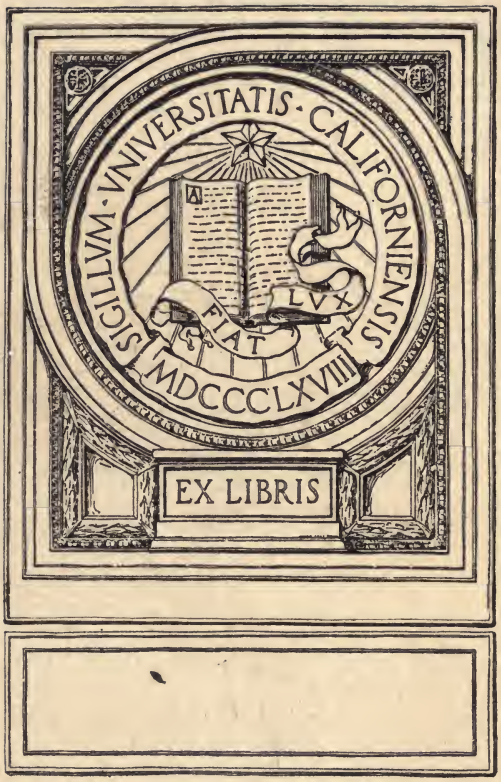
PICTURES & PROBLEMS FROM LONDON POLICE COURTS

THOMAS HOLMES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PICTURES AND PROBLEMS

FROM

LONDON POLICE COURTS

BY

THOMAS HOLMES

POPULAR EDITION

LONDON
EDWARD ARNOLD
1902

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PREFACE

In the various chapters that make up this volume I have made no attempt to deal with the whole of the humanity that finds its way into London Police Courts : I have but selected a few individuals who strikingly illustrate human or social problems. Each of those individuals was well known to me, and many of them have cost me anxious thought and prolonged care. It is in the sincere hope that the knowledge I have slowly gained of these individuals, of their characteristics and environments, may lead more influential persons to inquiry and study that I have written of them.

I am also exceedingly glad to have an opportunity of expressing publicly the debt of gratitude I owe to many ; for surely no one has received greater kindness than myself. First, to the various magistrates under whom I have been privileged to work I tender my sincere and warmest thanks for the consideration and kindness which they, without exception, have shown to me. To the chief clerks and police-court officials also my thanks are due for their unvarying courtesy and kindness. To the police generally I owe many thanks for the confidence they have so liberally accorded me.

To the representatives of the Press in the North London Police Court I owe much for the publicity they have freely given to the many cases in which I have been interested, and with which I should have been unable to deal without their aid.

To the unknown friends at home and abroad who have cheered me with kind letters, and sometimes with liberal assistance, I tender also my grateful thanks. But to one lady—Mrs. Perry Herrick—more than thanks are due. Without her kind help much that I have done I could not have done, and much that I have learned I could not have learned. For a long period of years she has supported me in my work, and in her the poor and the unfortunate, the demented and the outcast, have had a sympathizing and liberal friend.

To Mrs. Perry Herrick, then, I beg respectfully to dedicate this imperfect account of my work among the poor and the outcasts of London.

THOMAS HOLMES.

12, BEDFORD ROAD,
TOTTENHAM.

PREFACE TO THE NEW EDITION

It would ill become me to allow a new edition of this book to go forth without expressing my grateful thanks to the public for the kind manner in which the book has been received.

Public and Press seem to have vied with each other in showing kindness to me and gentleness to the book, while to its faults they have been more than a little blind. If I judge rightly, this is not because the book has of itself any excellence, but because of the particular work in which I am engaged—a work that appeals to the oneness of the human heart. I have received many letters filled through and through with sympathy; and while I rejoice to know that the book has been of interest, I rejoice still more to know and feel that it has in some degree helped to draw the human family nearer together. This was my hope and my aim; that it may still continue to do so is my heartfelt desire.

I have been compelled to add a new chapter, for so many have written to me on the subject with which the chapter deals that no choice was left to me. By the kindness of the Council of the London Police Court Mission of the Church of England Temperance Society I am henceforward to devote a portion of my time to special work among the poorest of all

London's toilers—the home workers. For them I have hopes and aims. If I can bring some rest and joy into their lives, if in some small degree I can forward the day when a much better state of things shall prevail, then indeed my joy will be great.

THOMAS HOLMES.

12, BEDFORD ROAD, TOTTENHAM,
March, 1902.

PICTURES AND PROBLEMS FROM LONDON POLICE COURTS

CHAPTER I

HOW I BECAME A POLICE COURT MISSIONARY

'You have missed your vocation in life; you ought to have been an actor, or a writer for the *Daily Telegraph*,' so I was assured by an eminent professor of phrenology. The professor had expressed a wish to meet all the London police court missionaries, with a view of ascertaining their fitness or unfitness for the position they hold. Mine was the last head he measured. He had passed all my colleagues, and had found no unfitness among them. Not being sure of my fitness, I waited till last; but when all had been declared good men and true, I submitted myself to his tape and measurements with some confidence. I wished afterwards that I had taken the precedence to which my age and length of service entitled me.

Now, I knew very well that as a missionary I had often made a fool of myself. I knew much better than the professor my unfitness for the work, for, gracious me! it has knocked me out of time too often for me not to have realized it. Still, I was a bit nettled when I found that I was the only one in a wrong place. I had not even the comfort of a partner in distress; but I recovered from the shock, and comforted myself

with the thought that they must be a splendid lot of men when I was the worst among them.

Yet it gave me pause. What if he were right? Fifteen years I had been blundering among poor humanity, hoping and fearing, racking my brains, never knowing when to give in, though often lifeless from the expenditure of nervous energy. Fifteen years I had been realizing that I could only move others to the extent I felt for them, and that there is no healing without loss of virtue. What if the professor were right? It troubled me, for I thought of the poor, the unfortunate, the downcast, and the heterogeneous mass of humanity one meets with in our London police courts. Some other fellows might have done them so much more good, might have comforted more broken hearts, and might have 'rescued' in a wholesale fashion what time I had been peddling and meddling with solitary individuals.

Still, I felt I had done my best, and I knew that there were eyes that brightened when I looked into them; I knew that I had made some little ones happy, that I had strengthened some despairing wretches, and had helped in some degree to lift the great burden of sorrow that presses upon the human heart; and besides, was there not the delicate compliment conveyed that I might have been an Irving or a Toole, or —ecstatic thought!—a writer for the *Daily Telegraph?* I began to think the professor was right, and though I had never been in a theatre till I had passed my fortieth birthday, I felt I had dramatic instincts and a relish for comedy.

My mind went back forty-five years, and I remembered that from a poor, starved, and small Sunday-school library I had got Defoe's 'History of the Plague.' How it thrilled and absorbed me! 'Bring out your dead! Bring out your dead!' ever rang in my ears, so with a rattle (lads made them in those days) in a little old Staffordshire town I ran about the streets shouting out: 'Bring out your dead! Bring out your dead!' I remembered, too, that I emulated the poor half-witted

drunken piper in the 'dead-cart,' and blew unearthly noises on a tin whistle, innocently asking: 'I ain't dead, am I?'

But whatever prospects I may have had of becoming an actor were doomed to early death, and it happened on this wise. A large travelling theatre came often to our town. How well I remember it, with its framework of thin deal painted green, and its patched and torn roof! Every evening on an elevated stage at the front the company in full dress disported themselves, the band played, the whip cracked, and there were pressing invitations to the small crowd to 'Walk up! Walk up!' How they responded may be gathered from the fact that one night the master of the ceremonies giving the usual invitation made a slight variation, and it came out as follows: 'Walk up, walk up, ladies and gentlemen, and see one of Shakespeare's most beautiful tragedies, entitled——' Here he became anxious as to the size of the house, and putting his head through the canvas to look, he soon drew it back, and called out to one of the company: 'Only five in.'

I never got inside this booth, but those who did told fascinating tales. One Shakespearian night 'Romeo and Juliet' was to be performed, and as Romeo did not come on, the 'house' waited in expectancy the while. The stage manager came to make some explanation, but before he could speak one of the company rushed on to the stage, and called out to him: 'Romeo's drunk!' But the messenger was closely followed by the pot-valiant Romeo, who roared out: ''Tis false, you dastard! Romeo is not drunk!' and promptly knocked the accuser down.

Coppers were scarce in those days; lads, at any rate, did not get many, so we searched the thin boarding for cracks or apertures through which to gain, if not a free pass, at any rate a free look. I had found one, and was with the aid of a pocket-knife improving my opportunity, when something cut short my aspiration for the stage. It was only the butt-end of the horse-whip that had cracked so merrily on the outside stage, but

it was quite sufficient to cut short my view of 'Maria Martin,' to make me sore for days, and to end my acquaintance with the stage till I saw the 'Sign of the Cross' at the new Alexandra Theatre, when, I am sorry to say, I liked Nero best. But I have never been able to command or direct my sympathies, for I well remember when I first read Milton that I had considerable admiration for Satan, and was always anxious to know how he was getting on. My curiosity on that point has been more than satisfied since I have been a police court missionary.

With all respect to the professor of phrenology, it is no fault of mine that I did not figure behind the footlights and 'tear a passion to tatters.' I never had the chance. But as to tragedy and comedy—well, I have in London seen plenty of each, though I have never been able yet to tell exactly one from the other. Things are so mixed up in life that sometimes I feel inclined to cry where other people laugh, for I have found that real comedy has too often a sadly pathetic side.

As to my being a writer for the *Daily Telegraph*, the possibility of it never dawned upon me, and in my most ambitious days I never dreamed of, let alone aspired to, such a giddy height. It is very sad to think how much the public and myself have lost through the proprietors of that paper failing to put me on their brilliant staff. I wish that I had met that professor forty years ago. But I am to make some amends for my mistake, for I find myself writing a book, and I can quite feel with Byron

> 'Tis pleasant sure to see one's name in print—
> A book's a book, although there's nothing in't.'

I cannot promise you flowing periods, for of the rules of composition I know nothing; my grammar is uncertain, and as to spelling, why, I often have to turn to my dear wife and ask, 'Margaret, how do you spell such and such a word?' and

she always knows; she is ever so much better than a dictionary. But, alas! before twelve years of age I was at work fourteen hours a day in an iron foundry in good old Staffordshire. Three farthings per week my father paid for me during the few years I went to school; it was a penny a week school, but they made a reduction on a quantity: two brothers for three halfpence, three for twopence, and so on. There was a large family of boys at our house, so if I could have gone to school a few more years I should have gone almost for nothing, and dad would have saved something. But he evidently thought I could earn something, and littles were useful then, so at the age stated I found myself in the foundry. It is now the fashion, I know, to make light of the schools of those days, and certainly there was much about them to provoke wonder; but I never hear the pedagogues of those times sneered at without feeling a desire to show fight on their behalf. They had their own way of doing things, but personally I doubt if they are done much better now, with all our resources. Perhaps they could not teach much, but they taught it well, and they had a power of instilling into boys a love of knowledge, which is perhaps even better than knowledge itself; for their boys were not in a great hurry to forget what they had learned, but rather sought to add to it after leaving school. What if they did use the cane freely? I never knew a boy get it but what he richly deserved it, and with it all the schoolmaster and his boys were much better friends, and a much better influence was exercised in those days than I am afraid is the case now.

The schoolmaster knew his boys then, and had a comparatively free hand in teaching them. If he found a boy who learned quickly, he advanced him without waiting for the end of the year, regardless of examination, and this produced a spirit of emulation among the boys. Every Friday afternoon those boys who had worked well during the week were allowed 'recreation'—in the winter by means of chess and draughts,

both of which he taught us; in the summer-time he would take an occasional walk with us.

Ours being a Church school, we had to go to Sunday-school and church twice every Sunday, and woe be to the lad on Monday who had not conducted himself well on Sunday! for he got something that he was not able to rub off in a hurry. The Sunday-school was held in the chancel of an old church, the remaining part of which was a picturesque ruin. Here at nine every Sunday morning all the boys from the day-school assembled, and as many others as could be induced to come. Teaching continued till 10.30; after this came a quarter of an hour's recess, during which time we were allowed to run riot in the old graveyard. We got a lot of play and not a few fights in that quarter of an hour. I have obtained a nice black eye more than once, and have marched into church thus decorated. Our schoolmaster, who was also superintendent of the Sunday-school, had a short way with the black-eye business. To the lad who obtained that distinction on the Sunday he gave a good caning on the Monday, and as I invariably got a decent thrashing at home under such circumstances a black eye meant something to me; but I never remember receiving chastisement for inflicting black eyes on other lads, a feat that I was sometimes able to accomplish.

The quarter of an hour being up, the master would appear at the chancel-door, and the cry 'All in! all in!' would be raised, fights and other sports would be cut short, and away we would all scamper to our different classes, ready for the march to the church, a newer building on the other side of the main road.

Sometimes, I remember, the fights were adjourned. My Sunday-school teacher was for a considerable time a publican. I am afraid he was a sinner, too, for he arranged the adjournment of a fight in which I was one of the principals, and on the following Monday night I sat on his knee between the

rounds, and on that occasion, at least, my opponent got the black eye and the caning. Nothing succeeded like success with a pugilistic boy, and the master invariably acted on the principle ' To him that hath shall be given.'

In church a steep gallery in one corner on the left-hand side of the door downstairs was reserved for us, there being the usual gallery for the congregation upstairs. Here in front of us, a little oak desk before him, and a white rod about 12 feet long and 1 inch in diameter beside him, sat the master for two mortal hours. I fancy I can see him now—a tall man, with spectacles, collar and stock, sitting bolt upright, grasping with one hand his white pole and with the other his Prayer-Book. Always intent on his devotions, he nevertheless seemed to have half a dozen eyes ; for though we were rude enough to call him ' Four eyes ' (behind his back), we really had reason to believe him possessed of a much larger number. For with his white pole he could reach every boy on the gallery, and though he never struck us with it, he did worse, for he prodded us. When he saw any boy inattentive, sleeping, or in mischief, he would put down his books, make a rest of his left hand, and prod with his right. It was not pleasant—in fact, it hurt very much—when one received in quick succession several prods on the chest or in the ribs, where they generally got home. I used to get into mischief on that gallery on which I sat four hours every Sunday for many years. But I got afraid of the long pole, with the cane to follow on the Monday. So I determined to be a good boy.

If boys did not buy their Bibles, Prayer-Books, and hymn-books, they had to go without them excepting in school. There were no penny ones in those days, and I wish there were none now. A Prayer-Book cost sixpence at the lowest, and we used to pay the master a halfpenny a time, which he duly placed to our credit. When a boy had paid his last half-penny, he became the proud owner of a new black and shining Prayer-Book, and he thought something of it. Proudly and

promptly his name was written in it, coupled with a warning to thieves; neatly was it covered in brown paper or calico; jealously was it guarded and treasured, for it had cost something: it had been worked for, hoped for, and waited for. Things had for nothing are lightly esteemed; the value of anything equals its cost. Nothing is more sad—I think I ought to say disgusting—than to see the way in which at all Sunday-schools (church or chapel) the hymn-books, Prayer-Books, and Bibles are used. Cheap and nasty in their printing and paper, shoddy altogether in the putting together, which cannot be called binding, they cost nothing, they are worth nothing, they are valued at nothing, and the dust-heap becomes the receptacle of the bulk of them.

But we thought something of ours, and I, who had never seen any book in my father's house but the old family Bible with the Apocrypha and family register in, learned my Prayer-Book off by heart as I sat for four hours a Sunday on the gallery. It kept me out of mischief, and it strengthened or trained my memory, but it also—and this was the chief glory—allowed me more time to play during the week. Sunday by Sunday, year in and year out, in the old chancel for Sunday-school, we had to repeat aloud individually the Collect, Gospel, and the Epistle for the day. They were supposed to be learned during the week. On the gallery, white pole in front of me, during those interminable sermons mornings and afternoons, I committed to memory the whole of them, and so had nothing to learn during the week—and the master thought I was a devout boy.

When I became possessed of a Bible of my own, I went for the poetry of Isaiah and the Psalms. At the Sunday-school, morning and afternoon, they gave us tickets, which were saved up and counted at the end of the year. They were little bits of cardboard, marked 'A.' for attendance, 'L.' for lessons, 'C.' for conduct. In addition, if boys committed to memory and recited on Sunday extra chapters, they were

credited with the number of verses repeated. I used to get all possible tickets, and a large credit of extra verses.

What an event the prize-giving day was in that old chancel! The boys all there, scrupulously clean, nearly all clad alike, for choice of clothing was limited; corduroy trousers, a Holland tunic with leathern belt, home-made linen collars, and Scotch caps made out of a sound piece of some disused garment was the general rule. The vicar and his curate, the master in his collar and stock, the clergy from neighbouring villages, and various ladies and gentlemen were gathered there. Then the prizes—what a heap of them, to be sure! I wonder what the boys of to-day would think of them—few or no books, no toys, no cricket-bats or footballs, but yards of calico, flannel, or cotton goods! Many a time I have staggered home with a big parcel of such 'prizes'; but how well I remember that mothers were very glad of them! Very few books were given, and those were of the old-fashioned 'goody' sort, in which a bad boy came to a bad end, and a good boy died young, and which made it appear that there was a very bad look-out for lads either way.

There was one particular Sunday in the year in which the boys had to uphold their superiority over girls, and the next Sunday girls tried their best to prove themselves better than boys. Both boys and girls became excited about it, so much so that I have seen them fight over the matter. This was Catechism Sunday, for which boys and girls would train and practise for weeks beforehand, both at school and at home. If the boys did well, a half-day's holiday at the Sunday-school was given them, with full marks and tickets. But if the girls did best, they got the tickets and the half-holiday.

On the Sunday afternoon appointed the boys, with clean collars and tunics, would be arranged by the master along the aisles of the church—a double row—facing each other. The clergyman in the three-decker pulpit would be interrogator, and put the question of the Catechism, and each boy in his

turn would answer the question put to him. The schoolmaster would arrange the boys, and from their lessons in the day-school would know how to place them so that the longer and harder answers would fall to boys who were good at repetition: Every mistake was noted down by the clergyman and schoolmaster, and by the girls, who were eager listeners. The girls had their turn the following Sunday, with the boys for listeners. The side that made the fewest mistakes were champions for the year. If any boy or girl made a comical mistake, or mispronounced a word, he or she would be known by the mispronounced word for many a day. We got a lot of fun and many quarrels out of the Catechism, and though it generally fell to me to tell the clergyman what was the duty I owed to my neighbour, and though my knowledge was perfect, I am much afraid that I never attained to its performance. So Sunday and week-day boys were under the watchful eye of the schoolmaster, and though in trying to get the better of him we sometimes dropped in for the worst (for he was a big man with a strong arm), we loved him, and he loved us, rascals though we were.

In those days boys went to work at a very early age; many lads that I knew went to work in the pits before they were ten years old, and started from home before five o'clock in the morning in order to be at the pit's mouth before six, that they might descend to earn sixpence by twelve hours' labour plus a two-mile walk. Holidays were never heard of unless there was some accident to the engine or machinery. Times were hard and wages were low; food was very dear. Bread was a shilling per loaf, and bad at that, sugar sixpence per pound, dirty and adulterated. Tea was about six shillings per pound, and in those days much of it was not tea. So before I was twelve I found myself in the iron foundry, working fourteen hours a day, getting three shillings per week, and thinking I was a man.

But before I left this school, a dark, bronzed, and severe-

looking man came in one day, and I was called out of class to work a problem on the blackboard for him. I suppose it was done fairly, for I went back to the class thrilling with the touch of Dr. Livingstone. He had said something to me, and placed his hand on my head. I never knew what he said, but I felt his hand, and my heart and pulses beat the faster. Now, if I had been a good boy, I should have been inspired by that touch, and have decided then and there to become a missionary, but truth compels me to say that I was not a good boy, and did not feel called to the missionary field; but I did feel inspired—I felt certain that I could kill lions. But after all, you see, I am in the direct line of succession. A great missionary's hand has been laid upon my head, and not 'all the water in the rough, rude sea can wash away the balm.'

But that was not the reason why I became a missionary; in fact, there was no particular reason why I should, but there was a long chain of circumstances, a series of events looking small enough in themselves at the time, but, seen in the light of experience, to me large and important events. But who shall say what is great or small in our lives' history? It was a small thing that led me to a night-school, and to teach there for years after a hard, long day's work, but I did it. Temperance societies, literary societies, mutual improvement societies are small things, but I worked hard for them all; and if I did not do a lot of good to others, I did some good to myself; if I could not teach much, I could learn a lot. It was a small thing that led me to take a men's Bible class in a purely Welsh-speaking district on Sunday afternoons, but it altered the course of my life, made a missionary of me against my will, and brought me to London to write this book.

The Divinity that shapes our ends shaped mine in a painful manner. Let me tell you how. It was a beautiful Sunday morning in early June, and I had gone with my boy and my Bible into the grounds of an old Welsh castle for the purpose

of quietly preparing my afternoon lesson. It was a beautiful spot; the old ivy-covered castle behind me, a lovely valley in front, beyond which rose the Welsh mountains, while the sheen of the sea was visible some miles to the right. As I lay prone with my Bible before me, I forgot in the enjoyment of the morning all about the afternoon, for I had to learn another lesson. I knew the poetry of Isaiah, and I called out: ' "He weighs the hills in a balance, He measures the water in the hollow of His hand"; "He spreadeth out the heavens as a curtain." ' I was full of oxygen and ecstasy. Immediately below me was a plain famous in Welsh history, for great battles had been fought there. So by one of those tricks of the mind—my mind, at any rate—I found myself at home, not with Isaiah, but Ingoldsby. 'And I thought upon Wales and her glories, and all I'd been told of her heroes of old.' I was just reeling it off when—— 'See me roll, papa!' I looked at my boy as he rolled about, and instead of laughing, I began to feel pathetic, with a sort of lump in my throat. I don't know whether other folk are the same, but the sight of a happy child brings to me thoughts too deep for tears. Alone on a mountain-top, in the solitude of woods, or alone by the sea-shore, I experience the same feelings. I could not talk to my boy, so he spoke to me. 'You roll, papa!' and he pushed at me. I rolled. I heard his merry laugh. I rolled again, and then—chaos. Some time after I heard a little voice say, 'Have you woke up, papa?' I stared stupidly. I could see the sky above, and that was all; at length I realized that I was in the castle moat, and I remembered rolling. 'I am only sick and giddy,' I said to myself. But the feeling did not pass off, so I managed to crawl home, for I lived close by. I did not leave my bed for some months, for I had broken bloodvessels, and streams of blood ran from my mouth. Thus I became a missionary, though suffering and pain and poverty for dark days and anxious years followed that Sunday morning—years in which

I was learning my lesson. Slow years they were, not of sorrow, nay, nay, but years of grinding anxiety. I could not dig, to beg I was ashamed, and no man gave unto us. Several times I tried the iron foundry again, but I was weak and ill, hæmorrhage still threatened me, and having made up my mind not to die, I had to find some way to live.

Thank God, my wife never went out to work or took in washing, nor yet plain sewing—hand in hand we faced it. I look back into those years, and see our little home in a colliery district of Shropshire. I see that little home every evening turned into a night-school. I see my gentle wife leaning over big-fisted colliers and teaching them to write: I see myself leaning over one and teaching him cube root, over another and teaching him simple addition. I see those colliers paying their sixpences. I see the rent put ready for Monday, and I remember how little there was left for Saturday night marketing. Those old days come back to me, and not for one moment do I wish them blotted out; nay, nay, I feel some pride in them. But I take another backward look, and we are in Staffordshire again, and my boys are going to the same old school that I went to. But times have altered at that school, for I see my boys winning scholarships and going to a grammar school, and started on an educational course that led one at least to a distinguished University career; but still hard times, hard times, for wife and me. We lived at an institute—library, reading-room, billiard-rooms, refreshment-rooms, skittle alleys, dispensary, club-rooms, gymnasium, all combined, and all to look after and keep clean. Wife and I had no finger-nails in those days; we wore them away scrubbing floors, for there was no one to help in any department. But here, also, was a night-school, which I had to teach; a literary society, that I had to conduct; and a mutual improvement society, also for me to fill up my spare time with. Hard work and poor pay was the rule in those days.

But one day a saint of God and king of men came in, as indeed he often did, for it was my privilege and joy to know and love him, my proudest boast to call him friend. Only a country parson, who laid down his life for his flock; but it was an inspiration to know him, with his strength and meekness, brave and fearless as any hero that ever trod this earth, gentle, loving, and sympathetic as any woman. How often have I wished him back with us!

'Thomas, you are not doing very well here.'

'No, Vicar, I am not.'

'This place is not good enough for you.'

'I don't know about that, but it is not good enough for my wife.'

'I am sure of that; but why don't you apply for this?'

'This' was an advertisement for a police court missionary at Lambeth Police Court. I laughed, and said I had never been in a police court but once in my life, and that was for thrashing a big lad who had been ill-using a lesser one. He, however, strongly advised me to apply for the post, and to please him I did so. It turned out that the Bishop of Rochester and his Council, not having the guidance of a phrenological professor, selected me out of a dozen candidates. I don't know why to this day, but I suspect it was owing to my dear old Vicar. And so I became a police court missionary, and came to London.

CHAPTER II

IN LAMBETH POLICE COURT

It was one Monday morning in May that I first saw the inside of a London police court. It is fifteen years ago, but that day is still fresh in my memory; nay, rather, it is burned into my very consciousness. There was I, up from the country, with great hopes of doing good, and not altogether ignorant of the world or the vices and sorrows of our large cities; but a revelation awaited me. I spent that day in a horrible wonderland, and although dazed and afraid to speak to anyone, I noticed everything and everybody, and I have a mental photograph of it all now.

Even as I sit and write, it is all before me and around. I hear again the horrible speech and diverse tongues. I hear the accents of sorrow and the burst of angry sound. I hear the devil-may-care laugh and the contemptuous expression. I hear the sighs and groans and bitter plaints. I see men shorn of all glory. I see womanhood clothed in shame. I see Vice rampant. I see Misery crawling. I see the long procession of the drink- or vice-stricken as they tramped down to the place of wrecked lives and slain souls. I see some going cursing to destruction. I see some going jesting to destruction. I see some going down with open eyes and passive will. I see some that long to be delivered from their body of death. I hear the unuttered cry, 'The waters have gone over me! The waters have gone over me! Out of

the black depths do I cry to be delivered.' And *I* was there to deliver them !

But I see and hear more. I see women with bruised and battered faces, I see their cuts and wounds and putrefying sores, I hear stories of devilish cruelty, and I hear the poor bruised women pleading that their husbands may not be punished for their cruelty. 'Don't send him to prison ! Don't send him to prison ! He is a good husband when he is sober !' I hear the words again and again. I see more women with poor, thin clothing. I look into their faces, and I see sorrow writ large and rings of care around their eyes, and in their hearts a weight of agony that makes them ready to curse God and die. My God ! and *I* was there to comfort them.

I see more. I see the children old before their time, looking up with pale and piteous faces. I see some with blighted bodies, and I know that rounded limbs and happy hearts are not for them. Still more do I see : matronly women, charged with being drunk, holding in their arms little bits of mortality. Puling cries are heard, but soon hushed, for I see the little ones draw from their mothers that leprous distilment that shall blast their lives and wither their bodies. I see more : young men to whom obscenity is the breath of life and immorality the highest good. I see some young in years who have already come to the wayside of life, for their bones are full of their sin. I see young women, sometimes fair and sometimes foul to look upon, but whether fair or foul, half beast and half human. I hear stories of lust, drunkenness, and theft. I see the smartly-dressed harpies who farm them waiting to pay their fines. I see the most despicable of all mankind, the fellows who live upon them, hovering by like beasts of prey. I see old men of threescore and ten and old women of equal age, whose tottering limbs have borne them from the workhouse to the public-house, that they might drink and forget their misery once more before they die.

I see them all; they are around me now. I breathe again the sickening whiff of stale debauch; I am faint with the unspeakable atmosphere; the chloride of lime is again in my throat, and my nostrils tingle with it. But I see more: I see the matter-of-fact way in which all this was received. I see that no one wonders at it. I see that all this is looked upon as perfectly natural, for I see no look of wonder, no divine pity, no burning indignation—all, all received as a perfect matter of course, and all, all quite as it should be.

Now, what I saw, dear reader, on that particular Monday in that particular court you may see on any Monday in any of our Metropolitan police courts, and on any other day, only in a less degree. Year in and year out the procession of the sinning and sorrowing passes through all our courts. Prison and death thin the ranks of the procession; but the public-house is a grand recruiting agency, and neither police nor magistrates are likely to be idle, neither is the procession likely to dwindle, or the 'yell of the trampled wife' to cease, while the public-house holds its triumphant sway.

But while you may see what I have described almost any day, there is much that you cannot see, and which, please God, I shall never see again. So come with me in imagination into the prisoners' waiting-room on that particular Monday morning, for it is well you should know that some changes for the better have taken place in London police courts. Out of a long corridor thronged with policemen we turn into the waiting-room, where the prisoners, excepting some few who are in the cells, wait for their turn to appear before the magistrate. There is a long list on the wall, with the name of each prisoner and number of the officer who has charge of each case, and showing the order in which they will have to appear. Scan the list, and you will see the part drink plays in it. 'Drunk and disorderly,' or drunk and something else, is appended to fifty out of the sixty names on the list.

Is it a lazar-house we are in? Oh no; it is part of an

English court of justice in the Metropolis of all civilization. Never mind the sickening atmosphere, heavily laden as it is with the fumes of beer and spirits. Look around you. You feel sick and faint? You must bear up, for we want to see the prisoners. What is that lying on the floor? That is a woman; she has had a fit, and there she lies with a bag of straw under her head, and not a single woman in the place whose duty it is to attend to her. What is that cowering in the corner? Well, that has been a woman, driven years ago by the devil of sensuality into the wilderness of sin, where she took to herself other devils. But only one has her in his grip now, and he will not let her go. 'Drink! drink! drink!' the devil says to her, and she is a dying piece of flesh whose only capability is the absorption of alcohol. That in the other corner is reported to be a woman. She has got men's boots on, no hat or bonnet, no jacket or mantle; her arms are bare; her dress, what there is of it, is short; her forehead is low, her broad face is cut and bruised, her eyes are inflamed, and her hair hangs loosely down. Twenty-four years of age, they say, and she has been in that corner one hundred and fifty times, and there's another hundred to follow. Poor Kate Henessey! an Irish girl of the slum, a mother at fifteen; an Ishmaelite indeed, every man's hand is against her, and verily hers is against every man.

But we hear voices all around us. Listen! Fast young men are exchanging coarse obscenities with that group of 'unfortunates,' and no one says them nay. Listen! Business men are cursing the delay of the magistrate and the impertinence of the police, for they want to pay their fines and be gone. Listen! You hear a girl of tender years bitterly crying; you hear a doddering old woman talking to herself; you hear knowing men proclaiming the iniquities of the police; you hear the loud laugh that tells the life-history of the laugher. You hear someone faintly ask for water. Look at him, a well-dressed, middle-aged man, shaking in every limb

as with palsy; he is nearly in delirium tremens. How the water gurgles down his hot throat! He does not know his name, he cannot tell whence he comes, and when put into the cells the furies will be with him and upon him.

You hear someone crooning snatches of good music. She has been here fifty times, a woman from a home of culture. She is half drunk now, and the old songs come back to her, although she has got to the lowest depth and rolls with pleasure in her sensual sty.

'Anybody got a smelling bottle?' They might as well ask for the moon, and so the decent-looking woman faints, and well she may. It is her first appearance here. She has been picked up drunk. Shame and fear, horror and sickness, take hold of her. No female attendant, so the unfortunates take off her bonnet, unfasten the front of her dress, and rub her hands till she slowly recovers her dreadful consciousness.

Here is a group of boys charged with gambling; here a couple of fourteen-year-old girls with being disorderly; here a mother and her babe; here a young clerk charged with embezzlement; here the old couple from the workhouse whose every returning holiday from 'the house' finds them in the public-house.

Mix them up, old and young, pure and impure, male and female, drunk and sober, cleanly and verminous. Dante ought to have seen that room, have tasted that atmosphere, have listened to the various sounds in major and in minor keys. All the social problems of the day were in that room, all the vices and sorrows of life were personified in it.

This is no exaggerated picture, not in the least is it overdrawn; I do not wish to give fuller particulars, I dare not if I would. No publisher would publish, no printer would print, an exactly faithful account of a prisoners' waiting-room of even twelve years ago. 'Rescue them,' said my employers, 'and the last day of every month a small cheque shall be your reward.' 'How am I to do it?' 'Here's a temperance

pledge-book; take pledges.' 'But there are others.' 'Give them tracts.' 'But there are the hungry and homeless to feed.' 'Give them tracts.' 'There are the poor wantons.' 'Take them to rescue homes, and let them work out their own salvation at the wash-tubs.'

Verily, if temperance pledges, tracts, and wash-tubs could save humanity, we had had the millennium long ago. Good, religious and well-meaning people talk very serenely, and with rare unction, about engaging in 'rescue work.' I doubt much if they know what they talk about. Have they ever thrown themselves into the very existence of a drink or vice-possessed man or woman? Have they ever stood in front of such a one, and said, 'Hold! You shall not go to destruction'? Have they ever taken women possessed of an unclean spirit into their own homes to try what human sympathy and timely help would do for such? If not, let them do it, and I venture to say they will hold their peace or speak with less assurance. I was afraid of my work that first day; neither did I require the phrenologist to tell me that I had made a mistake.

But there are other parts of the police court to explore. Come to the cells. Down the corridor, past the gaoler's office, turn to the right. There they are, all in a row. It is afternoon, and they are pretty full. The prisoners have been reeled off by the magistrate, and some are going to prison and some are hoping for the coming of friends to bring the money for their fines. The prisoners' van has not yet arrived, so we have time to see the prisoners. Come along. Do you feel bad already? You see the little trap-doors about 9 inches square in the doors of the cells; they are open, lying at a right angle outward. Put your face to one and look in. Ah! now you have got the full flavour of a London police court. One gulp is enough. How would you like to swallow some of that every day? You shudder. What! not for a small cheque once a month?

Look again; it won't be so bad next time. You look and

hold your breath ; while you gaze you get used to the semi-darkness and find you are looking into a woman's cell, for they do divide the sexes after they have been before the magistrate. There is Kate in the corner, but her blucher boots are gone ; the gaoler has taken them away because of her persistent kicking at the door. There is the festering piece of humanity in the other corner. There is the young girl who has stolen. There is the mother with her babe, for her fine has not yet been paid ; and there are others in that low, square, dark cell, with its sanitary arrangements in the corner, and no female attendant on the premises. Shall we look into the men's cells ? No ? You have had enough ? So have I. And here comes 'Black Maria.' A door at the bottom of the cell-passage is opened, and there stands the prisoners' van with its steps let down, its back-door open, and its cupboards unfastened, yawning like the grave for their prey. The gaoler hands a list of prisoners to the sergeant in charge of the van, the cell doors one by one are unlocked, from their cells to their cupboards the prisoners go, the cupboard-doors are fastened, the back-door is locked, the whip cracks, and away with its human freight of vice, misery and despair goes the prisoners' van. And *I* was there to save them ! I went into Kennington Park, sat down, and cried like a child. Thus ended my first day in a London police court.

Kind reader, do not say I am talking cant ; strictly religious friend, do not say I am impious : but that night I was 'a man of sorrow, and acquainted with grief'—ay, and for days and months afterwards, for my sleep broke from me ; and I wonder how many times in the small hours of the morning my wife has said to me : 'Now, you are not asleep. You are bothering your head again.' Why, they were looking at me, mowing and gibing at me, mocking at me, with outstretched hands appealing to me—the people whom I was paid to save and didn't ! If I dozed a little, I then began to talk nonsense, and my wife declares that I repeated 'Hosey-tosey ! Hosey-tosey !'

hundreds of times. I wouldn't like to go again through my first year's experience.

What a pitiful position mine was! No friends in London; to go day after day to meet with abject poverty, hopeless misery, and unspeakable sorrows; to have a full heart and empty hands. I have said many a time to myself: 'Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep.' It *was* deep —too deep. I wonder how it is that folk undoubtedly good think that poor humanity can be warmed, fed, and comforted with tracts, or be saved with goody stories. Poor humanity doesn't much care for advice gratis, though some folk seem sent into the world on purpose to bestow it. Just about my darkest days in my police court experience a well-known lady invited me to her house to meet a famous religious philanthropist. She wished me to tell him about my work. This gentleman gave very large sums in aid of revivals, etc. I could not tell him of the souls I had saved, or of very much good I had done. But I told him of my opportunities, of the humanity that I loved, of the wants of the poor, of their temptations and sufferings, and of their patience and self-denial. I think I was just getting a bit eloquent, when he burst in, and, in a knockdown manner, said: 'Do you give them Christ?' I am afraid that I was vexed, for I replied: 'Sir, I cannot carry Christ in parcels and distribute Him. I can only do as I think He would have done.' 'How's that?' 'I give them myself.' That closed the interview, for neither lady nor gentleman wanted to hear more. I am sure they would agree with the phrenologist.

Yes, I had to give them myself, for I had nothing else to give them in those days. And no one can say that I spared myself; but it meant something, for it nearly proved too much for me.

CHAPTER III

A CHANGE FOR THE BETTER

But a great change came over London police courts about eleven years ago. The description I have given of one court held true of them all at that particular time. If my memory serves me correctly, to Mr. Justice Wills belongs the credit of applying in the House of Lords for a Commission to inquire into the condition of things in London police courts. This brought about a blessed result, for everything that can be done for the comfort, refinement, and decency of the prisoners is now done at all our courts.

The moral atmosphere is vastly improved, but the physical is improved beyond knowledge. A matron to attend to the girls and women is now appointed, and paid by the State, at every court. Not only are there separate prisoners' waiting-rooms for the sexes, but each prisoner, male or female, has a separate compartment if they like to avail themselves of it. Young girls are no longer placed among the older and gross women, and, beyond having to stand in the dock to answer the charge, make but little acquaintance with the police court proper unless they are of that age, and the charge is of such description, that their detention in the cells is absolutely necessary. Male prisoners can no longer bandy words and exchange obscenities with female prisoners. The cell-walls can no longer be covered with ribald or filthy writing, for the walls are built of white glazed tiles, on which writing is impossible. No longer

do the prisoners sit in darkness and stew in filthy air, for the cells are lofty, light, and well ventilated. No longer are seven or eight prisoners crowded into one cell, for the number of cells is largely increased, while the size of each cell is lessened. There is no longer any necessity for the prisoners to be continually shouting for the gaoler, or to hammer their cell-door with their boots, for an electric bell in each cell gives them all the opportunity of communicating directly and at once with him. The tone of the police, too, is wonderfully raised, whilst the magistrates are not only humane, but also human, and in touch with the various agencies for the assistance of prisoners.

Everything is changed for the better as far as police court arrangements are concerned—everything but the prisoners' van, for 'Black Maria' still remains the same, and the little cupboards still gape for their prey. This ride in the van to prison or from prison is to many people—especially to a refined man or a delicate woman—a frightful ordeal and punishment. Again and again I have been told by such prisoners that their sufferings whilst barred in their cupboard and locked in the van for one hour have been far worse than any punishment received during their imprisonment. Prisoners must, I know, be conveyed in a closed van; neither will it do to allow them whilst on their journey to have free access to each other; but the cupboards might be larger and more comfortable, for it is the horrible choking sensation the prisoners experience that constitutes the punishment. The worst feature of it is that a prisoner may, whilst on remand, be conveyed to and from prison any number of times, and be then discharged, presumably innocent.

With this exception everything is changed, everything but the humanity that stands in the dock or sits in the cells, and that continues ever the same—the same old sins and the same old sorrows, the same old difficulties and worries for individuals, and the same everlasting problems for the State. Tramp! tramp! tramp! goes this procession of humanity

through our police courts. Tramp! tramp! tramp! goes the army of the dead. Tramp! tramp! tramp! go the thoughtless ones or vicious ones with eager feet hastening to join that army. Tramp! tramp! goes poverty with whining voice and suppliant look. Tramp! tramp! go the bewildered ones, the victims of circumstance. Tramp! tramp! go the afflicted ones. Day after day, year after year, a never-ceasing tramp of the wronging or the wronged.

In time the repulsiveness of the procession wears away, the evil smells do not so much offend, and one is able to make a close acquaintance with the procession. Then a field for the study of human nature is opened up, and nowhere in the wide world is there a field equal to it. Does anyone want to study the drink question?—here's the chance; the social evil?—here's the opportunity; causes of crime?—here they may be found. Every vice and every virtue, and every source of strength and every cause of weakness incidental to humanity are found here. Every phase of every social problem has its place here. The joys and pleasures of life, the sorrows and difficulties of life, the comedy and fun of life, the tragedy and despair of life, are illustrated here. Rich and poor, old and young, bond and free, refined and coarse, intellectual and idiotic, unite in this procession, strange specimens of humanity, provoking wonder, disgust, or mirth; pathetic bits of humanity, provoking sympathy and deepest pity; good and evil jumbled up; love and cruelty side by side. The 'devil's own' and the 'children of God' blend in this procession. A tangled mass of humanity, a glorious hugger-mugger of confusion, goes tramping, ever tramping, through our London police courts.

Clergymen and ministers of religion might do well if sometimes they forsook the study, put away their books of theology, and as followers of the Son of Man came into our courts to learn from the sons of men. Here would they find texts for many a sermon, illustrations to give point to many an appeal.

Members of Parliament might sometimes come here to learn their country's wrongs and wounds, and, inspired by the knowledge, voice those wrongs and wounds at proper time and place. Students of men, lovers of their kind, specialists in reform, experts in every subject, might learn much and unlearn more from a close acquaintance with police court humanity and police court problems.

For let no one say he knows all about these persons or things; such knowledge cannot be obtained, not even by a lifetime of patient observation. Many men, many minds; rather is it true: one man, one woman, many minds. One individual's moods and changes, vices and virtues, strength and weakness, the mind acting on the body and the body on the mind, now striving after good, now going headlong into evil—one individual alone presents an unsolved problem. But much worth the knowing and better worth the doing may be learned; yet it were well, perhaps, not to learn too much.

A short time ago I was listening to a very notable lady, who probably had never been in a police court. She was arguing that women were much better adapted for 'rescue work' than men. She may have been right, but I do not think she was; at any rate, her reason was quite wrong—'women can see through people better than men.' If this is true, the measure of their knowledge is the measure of their unfitness. Men may be the more credulous; if so, they have more faith and hope. I can see through no one. I do not want to. I am not worse than the average male, but I would not like anyone to see through me; and quite certain am I that I would not like to rake anyone fore and aft with mental rays. Many a time I have shut my eyes that I might not see, for I have learned to be pitiful. And this is the great lesson to be learned in a London police court. Wonder may be felt, resentment may be raised, but pity, deep and abiding, is the feeling that is bound to fill the heart of any lover of men that attends a police court regularly.

The public generally do not know the various uses to which a court is put; the poor and the unfortunate do know, for it is the rendezvous of the distressed. Let me give an idea of a day's routine, not as regards the duties of the different officials, but merely as the day's work reflects the outside world.

It is half-past ten a.m., and the worthy magistrate, accompanied by his clerk, has just taken his seat. The body of the court is already half full of people who have been admitted, after close questioning, by the official at the door. The general public are not yet admitted, for it is 'application time,' and the proceedings are *in camera*. Thirty applicants are seated quietly waiting for their turn to go into the witness-box and explain to his worship the nature of their trouble. Those thirty applicants are worth looking at and listening to, for they voice the difficulties, sorrows, and nuisances of life. It is, too, a comforting thought that at every London police court every morning the magistrate listens patiently and courteously to the different people who come and make known their wants to him. Of course, where summonses are asked for, it is the magistrate's duty to listen and grant the summons, if he considers the grounds sufficient; but where legal or friendly advice is sought, it is a different matter, for then he departs from his mere duty, and, out of kindness, performs a great work, which the law and State do not demand of him. Day by day, year in and year out, men and women unburden their minds and expose their difficulties and sorrows to the magistrate; and though many of them know before they come that the magistrate cannot solve their difficulties or remove their sorrows, still they come, well knowing that they will be patiently listened to, and that kind words will be spoken to them. And scores of them go away comforted with the thought that they have been listened to, and in their turn have heard kind words spoken to them.

The hard-working father, husband of a drunken wife, comes

and tells of the hell in which he lives, and though the magistrate has no help to give, and tells him plainly that the law provides for him no remedy, and offers no hope of release, yet even he goes away strengthened in some degree to bear his heavy burden, for has he not been spoken to kindly by the magistrate ? The poor, battered wife comes and tells the story of her sufferings, is listened to, garrulous though she sometimes be, and is advised either to take out a summons or to 'look over it this time.' Mothers come about erring daughters, fathers about idle, dishonest, or dissolute sons. Married sons or daughters come to ask advice about and relief from drunken parents. Old and tottering men and women come because grown-up sons, upon whom they had lavished all their love and substance, refused to help them in their poverty and distress. A father or mother has died, there are household goods and some little money left; how shall these be divided and the difficulty settled ?—by consulting the magistrate. The landlord has distrained, legally or illegally; how shall the truth be known ?—by consulting the magistrate.

Every kind of domestic difficulty is laid before him. An unwelcome but persistent suitor for a daughter haunts the mother's house; she seeks relief from the magistrate. The father and mother interfere with the course of true love, and a girl of sixteen seeks advice from the magistrate. An ardent lover has made his sweetheart presents, which she refuses to return now that the engagement is 'off'; he applies to the magistrate. An expected husband does not return home on the Saturday or Sunday; on Monday the wife consults the magistrate.

Lodgers with bad landlords and landlords with bad lodgers consult the magistrate; people with bad neighbours consult the magistrate; the watchful housedog barks at night; the neighbouring cock proclaims too early the dawn; the next door neighbour has a daughter who gives lessons on the piano; a strong-lunged youth practises the cornet on Sunday after-

noons—these are some of the smaller troubles laid before the magistrate.

But deep and hopeless sorrows are never wanting; and in despair and perplexity not a few seek comfort from the magistrate. Poor old women, whom no one in the world cares for, and for whom the workhouse waits—a place of which they are mortally afraid—seek help from the magistrate. Rosy-faced young women fresh from the country to some place of service in London, finding their mistresses to be of doubtful character, fly in terror to seek the help of the magistrate. And he sits and listens, and advises. A great organization some years ago in their appeal for funds spoke as if they were the lawyers of the poor. For years, without any appeal, any advertisement, or any reward, the magistrates of London have been and are still the legal advisers of the poor.

The ever-increasing army of the demented ones also apply in their hopeless conditions and with their inexplicable delusions to the magistrate. One is persecuted by the police; another is shadowed by an assassin; another someone is trying to poison. A poor woman wants the telephone-wire removed —'it talks to her.' An equally poor man complains of the telegraph. So they come and go away with their scrap of comfort. Much patience, kindness, sympathy, and wisdom do our magistrates exhibit in dealing with those who seek their advice on every conceivable and inconceivable subject.

But while the applicants have been making, or trying to make, their wants known, the prisoners have arrived. Those admitted to bail have surrendered; others have been brought in the various cupboards of the prisoners' van; others by different constables. The last 'small tenement case' has been disposed of; the inspector on duty for the day has applied for the police summonses; the doors are opened to the public, and No. 1 prisoner is announced. 'Drunks' first, with precedence for ladies, is the order.

There is a great deal that is monotonous and disgusting

about a long procession of 'drunk and disorderlies,' and anyone is bound to be sickened at the repetition. The same evidence in almost the same words is given by constable after constable. Moving among men and women, one cannot be ignorant of the stupidly obscene language that prevails among labouring men, loafers, and immoral women. But one scarcely expects to hear all sorts of men and women credited with the use of this particular kind of language. It may be, and doubtless is, true with regard to some apparently respectable folk, but, on the other hand, I am afraid that some officers adopt a kind of 'formula.' Certainly the similarity of language credited to different kinds of people is striking. Another noticeable thing is that men, as a rule, admit the justice of the charge, while women, as a rule, deny its truth point-blank and absolutely, and as often as not bring some counter-charge against the constable, and were they to be believed, we have few honest or decent men among the Metropolitan police.

It is interesting, too, to notice the many and different reasons that are given to the magistrate as excuses for being drunk. Joy or sorrow, ill-health or good health, poverty or prosperity, heat or cold, life or death, friendship or enmity—anything serves, for all the opposing emotions and conditions of life are given as sufficient reasons for getting drunk. Another thing is noticeable with regard to the list of 'drunks'; on Monday the charge-list is three times the size of any other day, but few women are charged, while on other days they often predominate; on some days the whole of them are women. I have a list before me now of twelve charges, all of them women, and all of them charged with being drunk. Taking one year as a guide, a recent one, when I kept a record of the whole of the charges, I find that about one-third of the charges are women, and two-thirds men; but, judging from my own observation, the women charged on the Monday do not constitute more than one-eighth of that day's total. I cannot explain why this is; I have conferred with experienced police officers,

and they agree that it is so, but, like myself, they fail to find any reasonable explanation of the fact. Although one case of drunkenness closely resembles another, the individuals differ widely, for though the poor in their dirt and misery predominate, yet well-dressed men and women who live in comfort and cleanliness are by no means absent. Ages differ even more widely than circumstances, for it is no uncommon thing to find a youth or girl of sixteen followed by an old man or woman verging on fourscore.

Appearances differ even more widely than circumstances or ages, for while a great number of ordinary-looking individuals are charged, a great number of the most extraordinary-looking men and women stand before our magistrates. Snap-shots of all prisoners at any court for one year would form an interesting collection, and be quite a revelation. The simple 'drunks' are soon disposed of by the magistrate, and follow each other in and out of the dock with great rapidity. A stiff fine for the old offenders, a lighter one for the comparatively unknown, and a discharge for those who make their first appearance is the general rule, though some magistrates adopt exactly opposite rules with regard to some first offenders.

A well-dressed man is charged. 'You are in good circumstances and ought to know better; there is less excuse for you than for the poor and wretched. We look to such as you to set a better example. You must pay ten shillings.' Thus one magistrate, and it seems right. But another will say: 'You seem a decent, respectable man; this is the first time you have been locked up and detained. I shall discharge you. Don't come here again.' This also seems right, though both cannot be right.

It takes much longer to settle the 'drunk and disorderly' charges, for most people who will readily admit the charge of drunkenness will deny the disorderly conduct, especially as the use of bad language generally forms part of the charge. The constable then has to give details, and call witnesses. The

prisoner will cross-examine, and in doing so nine times out of ten will manage to corroborate the police, and convict himself or herself. 'Drunk and assault' charges take longer still, for no two witnesses give the same account of a scrimmage. It generally happens that no one sees every item from start to finish; but, as a rule, when some blackguard is in the hands of the police, there is no lack of 'witnesses' who are ready to perjure themselves in order to get the prisoner off. When one civilian charges another with assault it not infrequently happens that there are accommodating witnesses on each side, and the magistrate has to decide between conflicting perjuries. Common-sense and experience then come to his worship's aid.

Numbers of lads from twelve to eighteen are charged with playing 'pitch-and-toss' or 'banker' in the streets. Up till quite recently it took a good time to dispose of such, for they were all innocent, or said they were, for the number of innocent boys charged with gambling is only equalled by the number of innocent women charged with being drunk. One day about eight decent-looking lads were charged. I was speaking to them in the prisoners' room before they went into court, and gave them a word of good advice. I thought I had made some impression on them, and finally advised them to admit their guilt to the magistrate, and tell him that they would not do it again. To the magistrates' surprise they all pleaded guilty and expressed penitence but one, who stoutly protested his innocence, when several constables were called to prove the charge. The magistrate told the boys that he was pleased with their honesty, candour, and penitence, and should deal very leniently with them, and, hoping they would keep the promise they had given, discharged them all excepting the 'innocent' one. He was fined ten shillings. So lads charged with gambling in the streets pleaded 'guilty' at North London till the plea no longer availed.

The more serious charges, as a rule, are held back till the 'drunks,' etc., are all disposed of. This is wise, for it allows the

majority of the police-officers to go to their duties or rest, and it also allows the majority of prisoners to pay their fines, and go home or to work as the case may be. Then come the charges of felony, embezzlement, burglary, etc. Upon these charges a great deal more time and care are expended, and depositions taken, a task that devolves on the magistrate's clerk ; and a heavy task it is, for some witnesses are supremely stupid, others too clever by far, and very many are so talkative that it is almost impossible to keep them to strict evidence. But whether stupid, clever, or talkative, every bit of evidence is taken down in an accurate, but concise way ; indeed, nothing is more remarkable in police court proceedings than the unerring manner in which the clerks note at once every word of the evidence that is germane to the charge. Rarely, very rarely, does it happen that when the clerk reads over the deposition before the witness signs it, he is asked to alter some part of it on the ground that it is not quite correct, and when this does happen it is invariably the fault of the witness. Such charges make a great demand upon the magistrate, and an absolute concentration of mind and memory are required.

Frequently solicitors are engaged, one trying to make the case appear black, and one trying to make it appear white. Very often they are able to twist witnesses at their pleasure, their business being not to arrive at the truth in any matter, but to make the opposing side appear in the wrong. To note and sift the evidence, to study the witnesses, and sweep away the sophistries of the defence or prosecution, is not an easy matter, but the London magistrates do it, and do it to perfection. I do not know any magistrate in whose hands the interests of a prisoner, guilty or innocent, are not absolutely safe. It is, in fact, no uncommon thing for a magistrate to protect a prisoner against himself and against his own or the prosecuting solicitor. To hold the balance of justice evenly day after day in all sorts of charges is not an easy task, but it is done ; and the fact that very few of their decisions or

sentences are annulled or revoked shows that the manner in which justice is administered in our police courts is beyond question.

Yet it is not a hard-and-fast or a cut-and-dried justice that is administered, for the spirit of the law is sometimes only to be kept by breaking the letter. Some people are for ever excited about disproportionate sentences, and are quite wroth when they read that one man has received a much more severe sentence than another, though both have committed the same class of offence. If the same magistrate has awarded both sentences, then the outcry is great. I once met with a gentleman many miles from London who kept a scrap-book for the purpose ; in this he had cuttings from the daily police court news, the sentences and decisions of the different London magistrates. He had them arranged in a most systematic way : the court and magistrate, offence and sentence. Contrasts were shown not only by comparing the sentences of different magistrates for similar offences, but also the varying punishments awarded by the same magistrate for one class of offence. He was rather proud of his work, and protested that law and justice was a complete ' hotch-potch.' He said he should like to see justice administered in a more logical and scientific way. I suggested that it might be a good thing to have a phonograph instead of a chief clerk, then every word spoken by witnesses, prosecutor, or prisoner might be spoken into it, and said that it would be easy to have an automatic machine for magistrates, so that by a combination of the two scientific justice might be done. The glory of London police court justice is that it is not administered in a scientific way. God forbid it ever should be ! for then injustice would be the rule and not the exception.

I hope the day will never come when our magistrates will have to deal out punishment as a shopman deals out goods —so much crime, so much punishment. At present they have hearts and sympathies, they have freedom and latitude—

better still, their freedom of action and sympathy of heart make for justice, for ofttimes mercy is the only justice. That mercy may call for a light sentence or a severe one, but whichever it may be it does not call in vain. It is impossible for anyone who does not hear a case tried, see the different actors, and know something of the attendant circumstances to sit (with justice) in judgment on the 'rightness' of any sentence that may be given. Until the whole of humanity is cast in one mould, until all environments are alike, until physical, mental, and moral power are equally distributed, until temptations present equal force and the ability to resist is equally distributed, equality of punishment will be either an impossibility or a huge wrong.

The young or middle-aged men charged with embezzlement or fraud are a numerous class, and a sad duty awaits the magistrate when he has to convict and sentence such men. To these men character is everything, and when the brand of conviction is once upon them, their future is dark and doubtful. In sentencing such, the magistrate knows full well that the sentence he imposes is but light compared with the punishment society inflicts upon the wrongdoer. They are therefore leniently dealt with, and where possible are dealt with under the First Offenders Act. The existence and application of this Act are too well known. It is sometimes traded on, and young men (and even boys) who have been pursuing a course of systematic fraud for a long time, and have at length been brought to book, will ask to be dealt with under its provisions. For the man or woman, boy or girl, who has yielded to a sudden impulse, the magistrates require no pressing for leniency ; but the prisoner convicted of a series of thefts, though charged for the first time, they do not consider a fitting subject for the application of the Act.

Drink, gambling, and lubricity are the chief factors in the downfall of these men, and it is a peculiar thing that journeymen butchers and assistant milkmen form a large proportion

of such prisoners. The two former vices seem to prevail to an enormous extent among them, while the latter vice seems to account for the delinquencies of clerks, drapers' assistants, etc. The women charged with various acts of dishonesty are a mixed lot, including as they do the unfortunate, the skilful shoplifter, the pickpocket, and the inveterate robber of furnished lodgings. Beyond proof of guilt these do not demand much attention from the magistrate ; but with numbers of females the case is very different, for though their guilt may be fully established, the magistrate has much heart-searching before he deals with them, for truly they are pitiful problems. Numbers of girls from fourteen to twenty are charged with stealing ; why they have stolen they do not appear to know, what they have done with the articles stolen they cannot sometimes tell ; occasionally it appears the goods have been destroyed. Their behaviour in the cells and before the magistrate is strange, for they appear dazed and bewildered, and quite unable to concentrate their minds on what is taking place or what is said to them. They do not profess penitence or sorrow. To a casual observer they appear hardened and indifferent, and while their friends come and plead for them and evince a keen feeling of disgrace, they themselves still appear indifferent, and certainly do not realize the position in which they find themselves placed.

But decently married women, who are beyond doubt respectable, are also charged with theft. Some of these present similar problems to the girls, and there is no doubt that pathological causes lie at the root of the mental condition of both girls and women—at any rate, of many of them. Such offenders, if offenders they can be called, are considerately and even tenderly dealt with, and the First Offenders Act is invariably put in operation with regard to them. A knowledge not only of law and human nature, but also of physiology, is essential for the proper consideration of many cases that come before police court magistrates, and they often remand

prisoners for a few days that medical opinion may be obtained.

There are, of course, many charges that need not be enumerated, ranging from frivolous assaults to murder, from stealing a drinking-glass to burglary. After these are all disposed of and the different persons interested in them have left the court, a class of charges are heard which I cannot even hint at except to say that they are sadly too prevalent, and that they demand the closest attention and scrutiny from the magistrate, odious and repulsive as they are.

The charges being disposed of, the summonses follow, and are mostly heard in the afternoon, or when, again, a mixed humanity tramps in and out of the court. The consequences to the persons summoned are not, of course, so serious, as a rule, as the consequences to persons charged, but, still, a great many are sent to prison for short terms, and many serious fines are imposed. Various are the offences for which the police take out summonses; infinite in their variety are the reasons for which private people summon each other. Infringement or wilful violation of the laws and by-laws of the County Council bring a great number into trouble. The Vestries, for a multiplicity of reasons, have to take proceedings against determined offenders. The Excise must look after the revenue, and is never behind in taking out summonses. The School Board claims and monopolizes at least one afternoon per week. So it comes to pass that about ten thousand summonses are adjudged in one year by the magistrates at one court. And they cover a wide area, and make a demand on the magistrate not only for a thorough knowledge of law and of human nature, but also for technical knowledge upon a thousand subjects. Having disposed of the summonses, excepting those adjourned, signed all the commitments and other documents, the magistrate's work for the day, so far as the court is concerned, is done. But I venture to think that not only many obscure points of law, but also the consideration of many remanded

prisoners and adjourned summonses claims his earnest attention when far away from the court.

Ten thousand applicants, eight thousand prisoners, and ten thousand summonses, would probably be a fair average of the humanity that tramps through a London police court in one year. And every social problem, every legal problem, every psychological problem, has its place among that heterogeneous mass. Among this tangled and perplexed humanity I have lived and moved for many years. I have seen it in the prisoners' rooms, the dock, and the cells. I have seen it at liberty, and have been in touch and communion with it while it has been in prison. In the ten thousand homes of it I have been a constant and not unwelcome visitor, while much of it has visited me in mine. By its dying bed in some great institution, or in some mean room, I have frequently sat. At the mortuary I have been to view some broken remains of it, at the cemetery to see the last of it. So in the remaining chapters of this book I want to tell of humanity, of its good and evil, of its struggles and its failures, of its glory and of its shame—yea, and also of its sufferings and its wrongs. Down, low down, for years I have been groping among it, sometimes blindly, and sometimes with a ray of light, making here and there some rough places plain, and untying now and again some tangled knot; but more often baffled and defeated, yet always learning and ever seeing some new point for good or evil among them. So of this humanity and some of its problems I wish to tell, promising that I shall only speak of 'that which I know, and testify only to that which I have seen.'

CHAPTER IV

HUSBANDS AND WIVES

'THE sight of this domestic misery completely appals me. I can hear no more.' Mr. Biron had been listening at application time to a number of women who followed each other in quick succession, each bearing an outward and visible sign of the fact that she had been cruelly ill-used. Each woman was a wife, and each one wanted a 'protection order' against her husband, until the experienced magistrate, rising from his seat, declared that he could 'stand it no longer.'

Every magistrate in London has the same experience. Some few years ago a number of such applicants were in North London Court, and the magistrate, with only half a look, knew what was wanted. 'Take a summons, take a summons,' he cried, almost as fast as they came up. A slip of paper was given to each, and away they went to the clerk's office. At length there came a nicely dressed young woman, evidently a last year's bride. She held her first babe at her breast. One side of her face bore the blush of early womanhood, the other the marks of a brutal husband's fist. The magistrate had been signing some documents, and had not seen her as she stood there for a few seconds. He looked up and caught sight of the bruises. At the same time the young woman raised her hand to her face, but could only say, 'My husband, sir—my husband!' 'What! Another of you? Take a summons:

If I were to sit here from Monday morning till Saturday to protect women that had got drunken and brutal husbands, I should not get through half of them.' So said Mr. Montague Williams, and he was not far wrong, for if every magistrate were to devote his time and energies to protecting women and putting right domestic grievances, they would not get through half of them.

A good number of Englishmen seem to think that they have as perfect a right to thrash or kick their wives as the American had to 'lick his nigger.' Yes, and some of these fellows are completely astonished when a magistrate ventures to hold a different opinion. I well remember a great hulking fellow, with a leg-of-mutton fist, being charged with assaulting a policeman. After all the evidence had been given, the magistrate inquired whether the prisoner had been previously charged. 'Yes, your worship, he was here two months ago, charged with assaulting a female.' As the prisoner declared this was false, and indignantly denied that he had ever assaulted a female, the gaoler brought in his book, and proved the conviction. The prisoner then looked up in astonishment, and said : 'Oh, why, it was only my own wife !'

Only their wives ; but how those wives suffer ! Is there any misery equal to theirs, any slavery to compare with theirs ? If so, I never heard of it. I have seen thousands of them, and their existence is our shame and degradation. These wives almost invariably have to support the husbands that knock them about ; precious little these fellows earn, and what they do earn is spent in the public-house. Their homes —one cannot call them homes—their abodes, often one, or at the most two rooms, are insufferable and indescribable. How can it be otherwise, when the slave-woman, the child-bearing machine, goes out daily to work and wash for others ? She has neither strength nor heart, and ultimately no desire, to work, wash, or clean at home, and dirt, unspeakable dirt, is the result. At last they become so perfect in their misery

that they never heed their foul disfigurement, but live and stew and breed in their misery and dirt.

These wives will put up with a lot before they complain to the magistrates, and it is only when the wounds are fresh, and pain and resentment have not yet subsided, that they will give evidence against their husbands. Smarting under their wrongs, they rush to our courts and beg for protection, but when the summons has been granted and a week has elapsed before it is heard, their resentment cools, and very little evidence can be obtained from them; in fact, many wives do not appear, and a great number of those that do appear lie unblushingly to the magistrate in order to save their husbands from prison. Sometimes these fellows have neither the grace nor the sense to see that these poor women are perjuring themselves for their sakes, and so, with that instinctive chivalry so characteristic of them, they proceed to cross-examine in order to show that the blame was the wife's, and that the punishment she received was but fair and reasonable —in fact, the legitimate outcome of her conduct. This often raises the last bit of spirit the wretched woman has left in her, for even the worm will turn, and then the truth comes out, and the slave-owner goes to prison.

I have again and again in my conversation with these fellows while they were in the cells known them to glory in the fact, and feel considerable consolation for going to prison in the knowledge that they had given their wives a good showing up before the magistrate. One day a great fellow was charged in North London with assaulting his wife. The offence had been committed that morning. The wife had come into the court all bleeding, for her lord and master had chastised her on the head with a jug. The magistrate did not send the usual invitation and give my lord a week's notice to appear. A warrant was issued, and before the fellow could well realize his position he was in the dock, and his poor little wife in the witness-box. She did not say much, but she was obliged to

own that her husband had inflicted the injuries upon her head just as she was going out to work that morning. The fellow cross-examined in the usual manner about his wife's tongue and temper, and complained that there was but little breakfast for him. The wife took it all quietly, but when the magistrate asked the prisoner for his defence and why he hit his wife with the jug, he coolly said, 'Well, your worship, if you lived in our house, you'd throw a jug at her.' 'Why?' 'You send an officer over to see, and he will tell you that he has never seen such a filthy place.' This was more than the battered drudge could stand, and she fairly screamed out: 'Yes, and if you would keep out of the public-house and go to work, I could stop at home and clean it.'

The secret is out. Drink and idleness, drink and dirt, drink and misery, drink and cowardly cruelty, are in close alliance. He went to prison for three months, hard labour too, which, as the magistrate said, would be a strange thing to him, for he had done no work since he was last in prison. And the wife went back to the den, to her children four, and to her daily washing. A few days before his sentence expired, one hot afternoon in July, I called at their place, and rapped at the door. A very little voice bade me come in, so I opened the door and walked in.

I shall not easily forget going in. I had first to cross the room and open the window to get some fresh air, and recover a little; then I looked for the owner of the voice that bade me enter. I saw a pitiful sight, but, God help us! a common one, for only too often have I seen such. A girl of fifteen, not so heavy as a child of five ought to be, sat on an old chair, with her feet on a rusty fender—they were on the fender because they did not reach the floor—a poor deformed cripple, the top of her back almost level with the top of her head; poor, thin little legs, fingers almost like doll's fingers, little bright eyes, and a face as sharp as a hatchet, unable to get out of the room for any purpose, yet left alone day after day.

An old tea-pot, some bread and margarine, some sugar in a paper, were on a very dirty table. The whole place reeked of filth ; there was nothing of the slightest value in the place. I asked it where its mother was. It said : 'Out at work.' 'Where are the other children ?' It supposed they were at school. I went out and got a few oranges and some buns, and, leaving the window open, I left the poor child, asking her to tell her mother that I would be round again in the evening.

I called at half-past eight, and found the poor woman had just arrived home. Weary and tired out, soon again to be a mother, there in her misery and dirt she sat. 'It' sat there —there on the same chair, in the same position, feet on the fender as I had seen it in the afternoon. The other children, who had been in and had eaten the buns and oranges, were still running the streets. After a while they would come in tired, have some bread and margarine, and then lie in a heap on those rags in the corner.

It was not a nice place, but I had to stop there for a time. I knew the husband was coming out of prison on the following Monday, and I wanted if possible to help the woman. How to do it was a problem. On inquiry I found that she went out to work every day and earned two shillings a day. I told her that I should like her to do some work for me, and that if she would stay at home, I would give her two and sixpence a day for the remainder of the week. She wanted to know what the work was, and I found myself in a delicate position, for I wanted to pay her to clean her own home, and even these people are touchy if you tell them that they are dirty. I rather pride myself on the tact I exhibited, for I got my way. A bit of bribery and a bit of cajolery, and she agreed to stay at home.

I was at the house early next morning, and there was a clearance. Out went the rags and the rubbish ; the ceiling was washed and whitened ; the walls were stripped and re-

papered ; soft soap and hot water made the place smell fresher and purer ; some linoleum on the floor improved the look of the room. A couple of pounds renovated the whole place, and a friend was good enough to give me some decent crockery, spoons, knives, and forks, etc. ; so the rubbish was burned.

On Monday morning I was round again early, taking with me some hot rolls, boiled ham, coffee and butter—in fact, a decent breakfast. I put a clean cloth on the table, a handful of flowers in a vase, saw everything ready, and went outside and watched for him, but did not let him see me. He was soon there, and I have always had a strong belief that he hurried home for a row, for he had not relished his three months. Knowing the man, I had no doubt that he would soon set to work on the breakfast. I had put some tobacco and a pipe ready for him. I waited for the breakfast and pipe to have its effect, and then went in. There sat my lord, monarch of all he surveyed, blowing clouds, with his legs comfortably stretched. He did not seem pleased to see me, and wanted to know what I was after. I told him that I knew he would be discharged that morning, and thought I would like to come round and see him. Might I have a pipe with him ? He pushed the tobacco towards me, and I lit up.

The poor drudge, his wife, and his little elfish child did not know what to think of us as we sat there smoking in silence. The fact was, I found myself in a difficulty, for I did not know how much his wife or child had told him about the new home and breakfast. But the brute, having been fed, I ventured at last : ' What a nice clean little place you have got here !' He looked round complacently, and said : ' The showing-up I gave her before the magistrate has done her a lot of good. You should have seen it before !' I did not know whether to smite him or laugh. He was a big fellow, so I held my peace, for he evidently thought his home, breakfast, etc., were the earnings of his wife. As he clearly counted it to her for righteousness, I played the hypocrite a bit, and to this day

the fellow believes it was all his poor wife's doings, though he takes some credit to himself for showing her up.

What was I to do with this chivalrous gentleman? The misery of that wife and the sufferings of the child appealed strongly to me, so I said at length to him: 'There's a friend of mine will be glad if you will work for him, as he wants just such a man as you.' I put it gently and as a favour, but even then it was a staggerer; it evidently was an eventuality that he had not contemplated. He smoked on and said nothing. I pointed out the condition of his wife, and the impossibility of her continuing to work much longer. I plied him with more tobacco. I told little tales to the little elf, and the little thing first laughed and then cried, but I could not get at him. Presently he turned to his wife and said: 'Aren't you going to work to-day?' She told him it was too late then. He smoked on. I was just thinking of leaving, when he suddenly said: 'Where is this work?' I told him. He put on his cap, and said he would go and see what it was. I offered to go with him; but he said he would not have anybody from the police court 'messing about' after him, so I gave him a note, and sure enough he went and he worked.

I arranged with his employer not to 'sub' him during the week, but every night the brute had a decent supper at my expense. I even prevailed on him to allow me to loan him a few shillings for his current expenses day by day, and so at work he was able to have his pipe and jingle a few coppers in his pocket. He worked all the week, and Saturday (pay-day) came round, about which I was doubtful. I knew what time he would be paid. I had noticed he had some conceit, so I sent up to him at his work a note asking him to see me at his home at half-past two, as I had an important matter on which I wanted his advice. I did not say what it was, but I had saved it up for the purpose.

I found him at home. As the wife let me in at the door, she silently opened her hand and showed me a sovereign in

gold and two half-crowns. I could have cried, but I did not: I went in. 'Here's the three shillings you lent me.' I took them as a matter of course, telling him if he wanted to borrow a shilling or two at any time I would lend them to him. He never said that he had given his wife twenty-five shillings, and I never mentioned it. He felt pleased that he did not owe me anything, and I felt pleased that he should think so.

We had a pipe together, and discussed the elf, for I had made arrangements for the little thing to have a few weeks at the seaside, and I thought it better for her to be away during the wife's coming trouble. We arranged it nicely, and the child heard the voice of the big waters for the first time, and she had another little brother when she came back.

I always had a strong aversion to this man, but I continued to visit the home week by week, for which visits I had always to find some plausible excuse. I could see that he suspected me, and looked at me with a cunning eye. I found afterwards that he thought I was watching him, and believed that I should give evidence against him in case he ill-used his wife again. I encouraged this belief, for it helped to protect the wife, and he kept to his work. He got more comfort and better food, for the way to this man's brain—I won't say his heart—was through his stomach. Tracts and good advice, pleading or rebuke, would have been useless with him; I had to take him as he was. He was an animal, as an animal I had to treat him, and, the professor notwithstanding, I did not make a very bad job of him, for he keeps to work and keeps his hands off his wife, for which two things husband and wife are the better.

Such husbands and such wives exist by the thousand. Stand outside our public-houses and take stock. You see a number of men, young and of middle age, loafing about, propping up the outside walls, waiting to be treated. Invariably these have wretched drudges of wives, whose lives and homes cannot be described. Hundreds of such fellows

find their way into our courts. In the cells I see and speak to them, and am frequently asked to go to the places where their wives are at work, and get them to raise or borrow enough money to pay their fines. I have some comfort in thinking that I have never helped to shorten by one hour the imprisonment these fellows so richly deserve. This wife-beating among a certain class is so common that I have found plenty of wives who take it as a perfect matter of course, and some do not mind very much unless they are seriously damaged. But there are others with whom it is far different; and this leads me to speak of another class among whom I have found agony and anxiety, suffering and hopelessness, that cannot be imagined.

Their homes are clean, nay, often refined, and comfortable; the women do not go out to work, and, unless absolutely in fear of their lives, they do not charge their husbands. But those husbands get charged for other offences, and I have made the acquaintance of numbers whose homes I have visited, and have found the lowest hell of misery, fear, and despair. I now refer to men who have to live by their brains and not by their muscles, but about whose brain there is something wrong—but what, no living man can tell. They can do severe mental work at great pressure; they are valuable servants, and keep their positions for years; but let them have one dose of alcohol, and their brain is completely unhinged; they become transformed into 'wolf or tiger, hog or bearded goat,' and all the devilish passions that can inhabit man are roused into active fury. Smash goes the furniture, sewing-machines and everything; away go the little ones to hide themselves. Woe be to the wife if she interferes! and, if she does not, horrible language, filthy accusations, and murderous threats are heard for hours. I have gone into many houses of this description, and have had to pick my way through the ruins of the home. I have seen the wives—educated women—crouching in a corner, and little ones have crept from their hiding-places and

sought shelter behind me. I have stood in front of these men, and have been horribly afraid for my own safety, for with a poker or hatchet in his hand, a man of this kind needs wary dealing. I know these men are mad, but I know that no doctor will certify them as such. I know their madness takes one form—jealousy of the innocent wife. So again and again, when I have been called into such homes, have I had to play the hypocrite and humour his delusion ; to have done otherwise would have been madness.

Many a time I have said, ' What ! has she been at it again ? Tell me all about it. Will you have a cigar ?' Hour after hour I have sat among the débris of the home, hearing, but not listening to, the accusations of the husband, for I have been thinking of the cowering wife in the corner and the terrified children behind me. But to watch the faces of these men, to see the gradations of passion, and the extraordinary change of facial expression, has not been a pleasant task. Yet I have sat on and on, watching for signs of exhausted nature, or hoping and waiting for some sign that alcohol had done its worst. And they come at length, for the physical strain upon such a man is intense. The wife and her children go to one bedroom and fasten the door. I get the poor fellow to another, see him into bed, leave a little light in a safe place, promise to see him on the morrow, and come away with the words, ' Mr. Holmes, I won't kill her to-night,' in my ears and in my mind ; for often have these words been said to me as I have left the room of such a man. On the morrow these men know nothing of what transpired the night before. They feel dazed, ill, and miserable, but memory is to them a blank. God help them and their poor wives, for, alas ! no one else can help them. Magistrates and police can do nothing for them, human sympathy is helpless before them. Temperance pledges and tracts are worse than useless, for who or what can minister to a mind diseased ? Drink in their case is only a symptom of a deeper-seated trouble. Cruelty in their case

is not a natural condition, but the outcome of their delusions. From these come the reports of many startling tragedies of murder and suicide. Of these I have saved none, but among these I have given myself, and am glad to think that I have often, at any rate, prevented worse happening.

The well-paid artisan class furnish not a few wife-beating cases, caused not by mental disease, nor yet by innate cruelty, but by regular and systematic drunkenness. These men work regularly, or nearly so, during the week, but Saturday brings to their families only added misery and sufferings, and Sunday no peace or rest. The scope for missionary work among such is very great, as one or two examples shall show.

On Easter Sunday six years ago a man lay drunk on his bed. The house in which he lived with his wife and family almost closed up to one of our large and popular churches, for the rolling of the organ and the glad strains of the *Te Deum* could be heard in their rooms. As the man lay there, his wife, a big-eyed and big-hearted woman, sat on a chair contemplating him. It was the twenty-first anniversary of their wedding. Twenty-one years before she had looked forward to married joys and domestic comforts, but twenty years of sorrow and suffering, unceasing toil, and untold cruelties had been her lot.

Presently there was a loud scream, but the man lay still. A woman, however, from another room ran in, and saw the wife holding a bottle that had evidently contained poison. She ran to the man, shook him violently, and called out: 'Get up! Get up! Your wife has taken poison!' 'Let her die, then! Let her die!' was the only response. A doctor close by was fetched, and he shook the man, but got the same reply: 'Let her die, then! Let her die!' Emetics were procured, the stomach-pump applied, and the woman was carried by the police to the nearest infirmary. I heard of the case, and I knew she would, as soon as possible, be charged with attempted suicide, so I went to see her. As I sat by her bed-

side in the infirmary, the story of the years came out. Her joy had been all bitterness, for the love she hoped for had turned to cruelty. Children had been born to her, but every child meant extra work and misery.

In a fortnight's time she stood in the dock, and the evidence of the woman and doctor was taken. The husband was in court, and heard his own words, 'Let her die! Let her die!' repeated by both witnesses. There stood the big-eyed woman, silent and sorrowful, for not a word could be got from her. But there was a daughter in court who was not disposed to be silent, and she came forward to tell of her mother's toil and pains, and of her father's drunkenness and cruelty. And the big-eyed woman looked pleadingly at her, as if to tell her to hold her peace.

The husband was called up, and asked by the magistrate whether the evidence given by his daughter was true. He replied: 'Some of it.' The woman was remanded for a week, and I was asked to make some arrangement for her. I found the husband earned good wages, and the only arrangement I could think of was an agreement between them for a separation, the wife to have a weekly allowance from him. This he agreed to, and was willing that his wife should have the home, he promising also to allow her fifteen shillings per week, to be paid to me. This arrangement met with the approval of the magistrate, who, on the remand, accepted sureties for the wife and let her go.

I got the agreement legally drawn, and wrote for the husband to meet me at the wife's home to sign it. I took witnesses with me, and none of us are likely to forget what followed. I read the agreement, and the man signed it. I put the pen into the woman's hand, and tremblingly but silently she signed it. The man put fifteen shillings on the table, saying: 'Here is your first week's money.' Then she stood up and looked him through and through. All the wrongs and disappointments of her married life were concentrated in her eyes, and he

quailed before her. For a moment she stood, and then, with a sweep of her hand, she sent the money flying over the room, almost screaming: 'Take your money! Take your money! Give me back my twenty-one years!'

As the man went down the stairs she stood over him, and the cry followed him—'Give me back my twenty-one years!' Week by week I carried the fifteen shillings to her, but no comfort could I give to her. I sent her to the seaside, and she came back none the better. Hope was not for her, and in a few months the gates of a lunatic asylum closed upon her. But that fearful cry for the lost years rang ever in the husband's ears. His wife being in the asylum, he had to look after the children or go to prison; he had even to contribute to his wife's support. So he had to drink less, and, drinking less, he became more human and a better parent. Twelve months passed away, and the gates of the asylum were opened to her; and he went to receive her and to take her home. There, with her children about her, she still lives, a great-eyed, sad-faced woman. No thrilling joy is hers; her heart and pulses never bound with it, for the sufferings of those years cannot be forgotten, the effects of them cannot be wiped out, but she has home comfort, if nothing more; for with the absence of drink there is the absence of cruelty. And after the darkness and storms of the mid-day of her life, I humbly hope there may be the quiet after-glow of the evening; and when time has laid its healing touch upon her poor, sore heart, the heart that yearned for love and sympathy may in some measure be compensated, and a chastened happiness be her lot.

A volume itself would fail me to tell half the stories of tragedy and pathos connected with this branch of my work. At many an inquest, if the dead could speak or the suicide come to life, worse tales would be told; for, broken in health of body and mind, with every nerve shattered, with not a spark of hope in their hearts, many women seek to end their sufferings by death. Numbers of such women are rescued

from it, and are charged with attempted suicide before our magistrates. Sometimes it has been a half-hearted attempt; at others a determined attempt; sometimes, dazed and half conscious, in a helpless, hopeless kind of way they have sought their doom, at other times with fury and despair, and others still with cool, calculating determination. But, whatever the method or the mode, when the law has released its hold upon them, such poor creatures become a sacred charge upon the police court missionary. There is only one way of 'giving Christ' to these, and it means weeks or months of kindly sympathy and the consecration of brain and self. I do not for one moment wish it inferred that most of our female 'attempted suicides' are driven to it by their husbands' drunkenness or cruelty, for this is not so; but quite a number of them are, and a sufficient number to make them an important part of any police court missionary's work—at any rate, they have been an important part of my work.

The sufferings of married women at length got some attention from the State, and in 1895 a law was passed, or rather an addition was made to an old law, for the purpose of affording them protection and giving them some relief.

As soon as this Act came into force our police courts became thronged with women applying for protection. Briefly the Act provides that any woman having a persistently cruel husband may leave him, and, having left him, may then apply to the magistrate within whose jurisdiction she lives for a summons against her husband for separation and maintenance. These the magistrate is empowered to grant, provided the woman proves her case, that the cruelty has been persistent. An order being made upon the husband, he must pay or go to prison. A large number of women have been protected by this Act; men have learned the power of the Act, and many have found to their cost that cruelty to a wife does not go unpunished. They have found, too, that they must either work or starve, and that, having wives, they must either

support them or go to prison, and in some degree, though only a small degree, women have been protected.

But what of the husbands who are possessed of drunken wives? Alas! there is no relief for them; the law moves not its finger to help them. Though their goods and clothes are pawned, though their children be neglected, and though their homes be turned into veritable hells, the law gives them no hope, the State no redress. Again and again strong, honest, industrious men come into our courts seeking the magistrate's help and counsel, telling the same old tale, exposing the same old sorrow, and the magistrate has no help to give, no counsel to impart. Letter after letter I receive, some badly written, many badly spelt, but letters which for absolute pathos could not be surpassed. Plead with these women, and it is like preaching a sermon to an east wind. Reason with them, and they will make worse appear the better reason, for they lie with impunity, and one and all declare they are the aggrieved and their husbands are the guilty parties. Stupendous are their lies, and yet I feel certain that many believe what they assert.

I have taken much knowledge of these women, and have come to the opinion that drunkenness is often but a symptom of some deeper cause. At one time I had persuaded some half-dozen of such to agree to separate from their husbands, who every week sent to me the sum agreed on for their maintenance. I used to call on these women, give them their week's money, find them a little work, and do them any kindness I possibly could. I am not likely to repeat that experiment, for I confess myself beaten; they were too much for me, and so far as I know I was powerless to influence them for good. I never could find out whether their peculiar mental condition was due to drink, or their drinking was due to their mental condition, and either way I was helpless. But I have met with some magnificent devotion on the part of husbands, and a love passing even the love of women. I will give but one

instance of this, and although it had a sad ending, yet it illustrates my statement.

'A Scene in a Police Court—A Painful Case.'

These words headed a paragraph of police news in the daily papers one morning in June. But the few commonplace words that told the story gave no idea of the intense suffering. Four weeks before an old sorrowful-faced man had tremblingly stood in the dock charged with a violent assault upon his wife. Four times he had been assisted back to the cells. Four times in the cupboard of the prison van had he been conveyed to the house of detention, for his wife lay hovering between life and death in the infirmary. 'Erysipelas had set in,' said the doctor. On the fifth occasion she was just well enough to come, and was carried into court, her head bandaged all over, one arm in a sling, and her face all covered with cuts and bruises. A chair was placed for her before the magistrate, and she was called on for evidence. 'I don't know much about it,' she said. 'I don't want him punished; he has been a good husband to me. I suppose he did it; if he did, it was my fault, for I was drunk at the time.'

Not another word could be got from her. The landlady was called, and said: 'These people have lived with me for a long time. A better man never lived; a worse woman could not be found. She has sold or pawned all his goods time after time. She has been in prison again and again. Many a time the prisoner has spent the night looking for his wife, and once brought her home dead drunk on a wheelbarrow; he had found her in a dustbin. On the present occasion she had only been a week out of prison, where she had been for two months. During that time the prisoner, who is a basket-maker, had got a new home together, had made it very nice, and went to meet her at the prison. When she got home, and saw how nice it was, she promised never

to drink again; but during the week she pawned many of the things, and when the prisoner came home on Saturday she was lying drunk in her rooms. He had a walking-stick in his hand, and as he passed my door I said, "Your wife has been at it again." Presently I heard screams and cries of "Murder!" The prisoner came down and said, "Good-bye; you will never see me again." Thinking he was going to commit suicide, I followed him, and told a policeman, who took him into custody. When we got back to the room, we found the woman lying in a pool of blood on the floor, and the stick lying beside her.'

On being asked for his defence, every eye in the court was turned on the old man. 'I can only plead great provocation, and call witnesses as to my character,' he said, in quavering tones. 'Thirty-five years we have been man and wife; twenty-five years she has been an inveterate drunkard, yet, as God is my Judge, I have never struck her before. She has ruined my home many times; she has been in prison a score of times. I had to send my two boys away from home to be away from her influence. I used to go round to where they lived and mend their clothes myself after I had done work. My friends wanted me to leave her, my sons wanted me to go and live with them; but I always said, "She is your mother, and she will alter yet." When I came home on that Saturday and saw my home again broken up, and her lying drunk on the bed, with the pawn-tickets round her, I was mad. If ever a man was mad, I was mad. All the wrongs I had suffered for twenty-five years came before me, and I was mad. I struck her I don't know how many times with that stick. That is all I can say, sir, and that is the truth, God help us!'

His employer then came forward, stating that he had known the prisoner from boyhood. They were apprenticed together, and for several years he had employed him. The prisoner's devoted love for the wretched woman was the marvel of all who knew him. He had personally and frequently pleaded

of him to give her up and go to live with his sons, who were anxious to find a home for him; but he had always refused. Two sons came forward and told the story of their father's devotion and their mother's shame, and begged piteously that their father might not be punished. They would be bail for him; they would take him home with them; they would look after him.

There was a breathless silence in court while waiting for the magistrate's decision, and down the cheeks of many present tears were stealing; even the court officials, case-hardened as they must become, looked very moist about the eyes. The magistrate said: 'Prisoner, this is a terrible assault. It is only by God's mercy that you are not standing there charged with murder. You ought to have left this wretched woman long ago. I can't give you less than six months' imprisonment.'

A scene followed that I shall not easily forget. An involuntary groan passed through the court. The two sons rushed forward in front of the magistrate, saying: 'Oh, for God's sake don't say that! don't say that! He'll never come out alive! He'll never come out alive!' The old man was taken to his cell, the sons went outside, and I went to try to comfort them—a vain task, for they were wringing their hands, and the cry like a sorrowful refrain came from them: 'He'll never come out alive! He'll never come out alive!'

And the old woman went to the workhouse, the sons to their home, and the old man to his prison. There was no light at eventide for them, no glow after the sunset for the old couple, for in six months' time a white-haired old man, bent and broken, was met at the prison gates by his two sons, who took him home with them. Every month an old woman from the workhouse was locked up for drunkenness, charged in the same dock where the sorrowful-faced old man had stood, and received her usual short term of imprisonment. And the old man reaped not the fruit of his long years of patient endurance,

beautiful faith and marvellous devotion, for death soon came to him, and no wife was present to close his eyes. And when she shortly afterwards died in the workhouse there were no sons present to bid her a long farewell.

The law ought to give such men redress. 'Sauce for the goose' is not yet 'sauce for the gander.' A battered wife may claim and get the assistance the law has wisely provided. Husbands of habitually drunken wives ought to have, and it is monstrous that they do not have, equal rights and privileges. The Habitual Inebriates Act of 1898 does not apply to these women; it only applies to women charged four times in one year. But the women charged four times in one year are —at least, eighty per cent. are — homeless 'unfortunates,' victims, not of drink, but of sensuality or of mental disease. These a kind Government has provided for, and offers ten and sixpence per week for a period not exceeding three years and not less than one to such philanthropic societies, public bodies and private individuals who will undertake to care for them. County Councils in their turn are also willing to supplement the Government grant by a contribution of six and sixpence per week for such 'habitual inebriates' as shall be charged or committed within their jurisdiction.

Here, then, is an extraordinary position. Unspeakably gross women are cared for; idleness, sensuality, or dementia are treated as inebriety; the public are taxed or rated to the extent of seventeen shillings per week for everyone committed to an inebriate reformatory. These, after their one, two, or three years' detention have passed, will come back to their old haunts, their old vice, and their old shame. They have already begun to do so. But the really inebriate go uncared for, and from thousands of homes comes the despairing cry for help. From good husbands and loving fathers, from neglected children in blighted homes, the sorrowful cry goes up unto Heaven; and the wreckage of such homes is all about us But to all this the law has nothing to say unless the wretched

woman gets charged four times in one year. Surely, if it is right—and it is right—that a down-trodden wife should be protected, it is equally right and just, nay, it is absolutely imperative, that a husband should have some means of obtaining redress—some chance of lightening his heavy burden. Hundreds of husbands bear this kind of life till they can bear it no longer, and they take themselves off, leaving their wives and families to be cared for by the parish, and the law is set in motion to find them, for many are brought back and punished. Many bear with this life till maddened nature can stand it no longer, and a violent assault ensues, followed by prosecution and imprisonment.

The wife may summon the husband. Why may not the husband summon the wife? If a wife commits a certain offence once, though in every other respects she may be a decent woman, the law is outraged and society scandalized, so much so, that the husband is entitled to cast her off. But a lifetime of wifely drunkenness, of horrible dirt, of insensate waste and utter neglect, are at present not worth a moment's consideration. These are the women who ought to be the inmates of our inebriate reformatories, and numbers of husbands would be only too glad to pay reasonable sums for their detention and treatment. Let the State keep and control its criminal inebriates, and treat them scientifically for whatever may be the matter with them. Private individuals or philanthropic societies will not be able to do much with them or for them; but they might do much for drunken wives if those wives were committed to their care.

We have heard so much of women's rights that there is a danger of the rights of men being overlooked, so on their behalf I contend that the sober husband of a drunken wife should have the power of summoning her before the magistrate, when, if it is proved that she is persistently drunken, the magistrate shall have the power of committing her for not less than a year to some certified inebriate reformatory; and at the

same time an order should be made upon the husband for a weekly contribution towards his wife's support while she is in the reformatory. Wives know only too well that the law will not interfere with them for home drunkenness. They are perfectly aware that they can snap their fingers at the husband, police, or magistrate, and, knowing this, many of them are quite content to live in filth and misery. Happy would it be for them if they were for a time taken out of that misery; great would be the relief to many decent husbands, while untold numbers of children would be infinitely happier. Sober, industrious people have rights as well as drunkards, and it is high time the State considered those rights—high time, too, that the State considered the wrongs inflicted on itself by such drunkenness, for, though the State at present does not care, it is not let off easily. It has to pay, and the penalty is a heavy one.

CHAPTER V

PARENTS AND CHILDREN

'PLEASE, sir, I want a summons.' It was application time, and the speaker who stood in the witness-box was a boy of about twelve, evidently from a comfortable home. He wore a good Eton suit of clothes, and his collar was immaculate. 'Whom do you want a summons against?' he was asked. 'My father, sir.' The magistrate looked at him and asked: 'What has your father done to you?' 'Please, sir, he has assaulted me.' 'That was very wrong of your father. Why did he do so?' 'Please, sir, he said that I had been rude to my sister.' 'Did he, though? Yes, you can take a summons.' 'Please, sir, how much will it be?' 'Two shillings, my little man.' 'Please, sir, I am under twelve. Can't I have it half-price?' 'Oh no, my boy; we have no half-price summonses.' 'But I have only one shilling, sir.' 'Then you must go and get another before your summons can be issued.'

The boy went, and those of us who heard his application naturally thought we had seen the last of him. We were wrong, for in a short time he came back with another shilling, and the summons was issued. In due time father and son were before the court, the boy as prosecutor and the father as defendant. The father, a portly, well-dressed man, was boiling with rage, and could scarcely restrain himself whilst the boy gave evidence and told how his father had beaten him. 'Has your father ever assaulted you before?' the

magistrate asked. 'No, sir; this is the first time.' 'I am sorry for that,' the magistrate said, 'because I am going to dismiss the summons—on one condition only, and that is that your father takes you home and gives you a double dose of what he gave you last time.' And turning to the father: 'And mind you do it, sir.' 'I will cheerfully carry out your worship's instruction,' the father said. And there is no doubt he did. So the young hopeful lost his two shillings and got a second thrashing.

That boy interested me. I thought I might learn something if I made an official call. So one evening I called, and was fortunate enough to find the boy and mother at home; the father had not returned from business. I told them who I was, and referred to the summons, and asked whether the father had carried out the magistrate's wish. 'Yes,' said the mother, 'he did; and he would have given him more if I had not stopped him.' I found that both father and mother belonged to that numerous class of parents who 'never allow anyone to beat their children.' These were the words of the mother, and the father, too, had acted on the same principle, for he had removed this boy from two schools because the teacher had given him physical chastisement, and in one case he had written to the master threatening to take police court proceedings against him.

Of course, the inevitable result followed, and there came a time at home when punishment had to be given. The boy said sullenly to me: 'He makes row enough when anybody else touches me. I should not have thought about a summons, I did not know anything about summonses, till I heard him threaten to summon the teacher.' I did not feel so sure about the justice of the magistrate's decision after hearing that.

Now, these parents are typical of a large class that exists in the middle and lower walks of life. Heaven help the children! for in most cases the parents pile up misery for them. The lives of teachers at our Board and Church schools

would not be tolerable were it not for the wisdom and common-sense of our London magistrates. Many are the irate and voluble women that rush into our courts applying for summonses against school-teachers, very few of which are granted. It is not an edifying spectacle to see a worthy magistrate inspecting some young urchin to ascertain whether undue chastisement has been given, but it is not an uncommon sight. 'Look at him yourself. You would not like one of your children served like he is. He is black and blue all over.' And the magistrate looked. 'Pooh!' he said. 'Is that all? I have had it worse than that many a time, and am all the better for it. I shan't give you a summons. Take the boy away, and tell him to behave properly.' But sometimes, when the parents can afford it, a solicitor makes application on their behalf, and assures the magistrate that the punishment has been excessive, and that medical evidence will be forthcoming. A summons is then granted, and the matter comes before the court.

Only a few months ago such a case came before one of our courts. An exceedingly well-dressed woman had obtained a summons against a school-teacher for beating her child, a boy under four years of age, who had attended school for nearly a year. He was a plump, robust, restless child, dressed in blue velvet and cream lace. The case occupied some hours in settlement, two solicitors and doctors being interested in it, besides some half-dozen witnesses. I closely watched the mother and infant, and saw that she herself had not the slightest control over the boy. He was restless, and would be meddling. She spoke to him several times without any effect, and twice at least she snatched his arm with considerable violence, but he paid no heed; evidently he was under no discipline at home. But he was an encumbrance, and so, at an age when he ought to have been in the nursery at home or rolling on the carpet, he was sent to a Board School, that the mother might not be bothered with him.

It is good to know that the poor mother who has to go out to work can send her young children to the Board School, where they will be taken care of; but it points to something wrong when well-dressed and well-to-do mothers send their infants to such places in order to be rid of them for a time. Such mothers, incapable of training or controlling their own children, bitterly resent anyone else trying in the least degree to discipline them. They cannot be worried or bothered with their own little ones, but precious little they care what trouble or worry is brought upon others; but the children must not be chastised. This is one of the signs of the times, and it pervades a good many sections of society, with disastrous results, for hundreds of children become, not only wilful and wicked, but also criminals, because of it. I am continually getting letters from parents—fathers and mothers—asking my advice or assistance with regard to children whom the parents declare themselves unable to control. I have been offered money if I would take such children off their parents' hands, and place them somewhere where they could not annoy their parents.

I know that in the best regulated homes, where parents love their children, and take infinite pains with them, sometimes boys and girls of tender age develop strange and even extraordinary characteristics, and the parents are often at their wit's end with regard to them. I remember a boy of eight being charged with stealing two pounds from his parents. He had made his way to Euston, and booked to Liverpool, taking a half-ticket. He got to his destination safely, but was soon in the hands of the police for wandering. The London police were communicated with, and by them he was fetched back, to be charged with the theft. He was an inveterate traveller, and it was by no means the first time that he had taken a long railway journey 'all on his own.' These kind of boys are by no means scarce, and interesting lads they are, exhibiting as they do pluck, resource, and self-reliance.

Another boy of the same age had left home above a dozen times, and had taken considerable railway journeys without once paying for a ticket. In his way he showed great skill. He lived at Old Ford, and would get on the platform at Victoria Park and into the train, change at Dalston—where he would not have to leave the station—get into a Willesden train (N.L.), get down to the main line, and travel to St. Albans and other places. On the last occasion he travelled to Fenny Stratford, but was brought back and charged. The magistrate stopped his wanderings for a time by sending him to an industrial school till he was sixteen. These lads have talents which ought to be made useful; they are worth looking after.

But the great majority of boys and girls go wrong not because of any extraordinary character they may have, but because of the indifference, idleness, or worthlessness of their parents. I am persuaded that it is not the poverty of the parents, not the environments of the children, not the possession of criminal instincts, that lead the great bulk of boys to wrong, but the utter indifference and incapability of parents, though, indeed, it sometimes happens that such parents have children that appear to be criminals almost from birth. What can be said of two small boys, one under twelve, the other about eight years of age, who stood in the dock a few days ago? They were exceedingly small for their age, neither of their heads appearing over the dock-rails, so they were brought out and taken up to the magistrate. The charge against them was that of being in unlawful possession of a gold ring, which they had endeavoured to pawn. They both declared that they found it. Perhaps they did, but, unfortunately, they had both been on the 'kinchin lay' for some time past, and were in partnership. The proceeds of their robberies were duly tabulated, and there does not appear to have been any dispute about the partition of profits. On the elder boy was found a small manuscript book, which he had made himself by cutting sheets of paper and stitching them together. His

full name and address was fairly written on the cover. Inside were some quotations from the New Testament, followed by the names of bygone wars, and of existing British regiments. Then came the daily account of their business transactions, which appear to have been somewhat extensive. Some of the entries were as follows :

Monday morning, ¼d., 3½d., 3d., 1½d.—total, 8¼d.
Monday afternoon, ½d., 3d., 2d., 1d. —total, 6½d. } Total, 1s. 2¾d.

They freely admitted that this was an account of money taken on one day from smaller children, who had been going on errands. Veritable Noah Claypoles both, it would appear. But from a long conversation that I had with them, I came to the conclusion that it was not inherent wickedness on their part, but the wicked indifference of their parents, that made them what they were. I noticed, too, that although the boys were several times before the court before they were disposed of, and had been twice remanded to the workhouse, the parents did not come near, and never troubled to make a single inquiry about the boys. We hear a great deal about the cruelty of parents to children, and a National Society exists to prevent or punish it. But I would like to see the national conscience aroused on the indifference and apathy of parents, for great as the evils of cruelty to children undoubtedly are, they are infinitesimal compared to evils wrought upon children and the State by the gross indifference shown by so many parents.

I am glad to say that the magistrate committed the elder boy to an industrial school till sixteen, so that an indulgent State will take on itself the trouble and expense that worthless parents ought to have taken and have borne. But the younger was sent back to them to graduate still further in crime.

Surely it is a lesser evil to hurt the body of a child than to blast its mind and destroy its character. But some parents are not only indifferent to what becomes of their children, but will also take some pains to get rid of them ; and they know

how to do it, for the State has taught them that not only can they neglect their children with impunity, but also that, if they neglect them sufficiently, their children will be taken from them, and housed, clothed, fed and taught without a penny of expense to them. True, it is sometimes a long process, but if they persevere it comes to pass in the end.

But some seek to hasten this consummation by giving their children into custody, and charging them with being 'beyond control,' in the hope that the magistrate will relieve them of their responsibilities. Should this fail, I have known such parents leave money about for a boy to steal that he might be charged with theft. I know one father who left a sovereign ostentatiously lying about for a boy to take. He did take it, spent it, and was charged. To the father's intense disgust and dismay, the magistrate refused to punish the boy or commit him to a reformatory—nay, he went beyond that, for he insisted on taking the father's recognizances for the boy's good behaviour. This was just and wise; but the father was not pleased, for he had lost his sovereign and kept his boy, and I am afraid the lad did not have a good time of it.

Another father of this description had induced the State to take charge of three of his boys. One was in a reformatory, one on a ship, and one in an industrial school. But he was not satisfied, for he wanted to get rid of the fourth, and wrote to me. I did not reply, so he came to see me, and gave the boy a terrible character. He told me how happy his other boys were, and what an intense longing this one had to go on a 'ship.' I told him to look well after his boy, and that I could not assist him. Some time afterwards the boy was charged with stealing thirty shillings from his employer. He was only twelve, and had not left school, but acted as errand-boy in the evenings and on Saturdays. I found from the boy that he was terribly afraid of being sent to sea; neither did he wish to leave home. He told me also—and I believed him

—that for some time past his father had been suggesting to him that he should take some money, and get sent to his brother at the industrial school. The lad followed his father's advice to the extent of stealing, but it did not turn out as the father wished, for the youngster bought two cheap pistols and a supply of ammunition, and, taking a younger boy with him, went on a hunting expedition in Epping Forest. So long as the money lasted he paid for food and lodgings for both, and they seem to have enjoyed themselves immensely. But even thirty shillings will not last for ever, and poverty compelled the lads to return, when the elder was promptly given into custody. The tradesman did not wish to prosecute, but the father insisted, and told a sad tale to the magistrate about the boy's misdeeds. But it did not come off, for the magistrate looked upon it as a boyish escapade, and treated him under the First Offenders' Act, taking the father's security for the boy.

But even if such parents are balked of their desire, and are compelled to keep their own children, the lot of such children is not favourable to the formation of good character, and sooner or later many of them get again into the hands of the police. The disinclination to take pains to train their children is by no means confined to the poor. It is noticeable also among those who are in better circumstances. Not infrequently I have met with it among educated people. A short time ago I visited a lady and gentleman who lived in their own house, which was expensively furnished. Their son, aged fifteen, was in trouble. They were by no means concerned about him, and told me that it was his look-out if he got into the hands of the police; they had done their duty by him, and had given him a good education. I found that their duty consisted of sending him to a large boarding school at an early age, paying for him till he was fifteen, and then telling him to find some occupation for himself. This he did by becoming an errand-boy at six shillings per week, an elder brother being engaged at a butcher's shop in a similar capacity.

With parents so indifferent, naturally the lad went wrong. Ultimately the father came to the court, and actually pressed for the boy's committal to a reformatory, a result that would have happened had I not begged the magistrate to let me care for the boy. This was agreed to, and I placed the boy in a better situation, where his education would be of service, and where his future prospects were hopeful. I am glad to say he is doing well so far.

Many parents are equally indifferent, and to tell them that it is their duty, as it ought to be their pleasure, to see that their boys have a suitable start in life almost staggers them. The amount of joy and thrilling happiness that is lost to parents by this one fault alone cannot be conceived; the amount of misery, sorrow, and crime that is substituted is also immeasurable. Worst of all parental vices, most certain in its results, most deadly in its consequences, is the growing one of indifference with regard to their children. Our reformatories are full because of it, countless agencies are called into existence, and vast sums of money are expended in the vain endeavour to undo the evil that it has created. 'Don't care' always comes to a bad end, but 'don't care' in parents is doubly cursed, for it curses both parents and children. If parents would but understand that it is a natural law, from which there is no exemption, that with the measure they mete to their children it shall be measured back to them! But a voice from the dead is almost needed to wake some parents from their gross apathetic idleness with regard to the culture of their children. Were it different, we should not have thousands of boys and girls leaving home at fifteen and sixteen years of age, going to doubtful lodgings and following doubtful occupations. Can any good come if young girls earning six shillings a week leave home and essay to live on their earnings? The worst is sure to happen; it does happen, and ere long they join the 'unfortunate' class, and are met with by the score at our police courts. Can any good come

if a lad of sixteen, earning twelve shillings a week, leaves home and goes to a men's lodging-house ? Yet thousands of them do it. The worst again is sure to happen, and it does happen : they graduate in crime, and we meet with these by the score at our police courts.

Another course is often followed by these young people, with equally disastrous results, for boys and girls set up homes of their own and commence life on their own account, sometimes going through the form of marriage, oftener not. The home is invariably one room furnished on the hire system. The boy's twelve shillings and the girl's six enable them to live for a time, but a baby comes, the girl's earnings cease, the furniture payments must be kept up. Then comes squalor, misery, and want. The rest can be imagined, and it lasts for life. A young couple of this description, who had lost their home, were found with two children sleeping in a van, and were charged. The husband was twenty-one and the wife nineteen ; they had been married three years. They promised to go into the workhouse, and, on being discharged, were escorted thither by the constable who arrested them.

Some time afterward the boy husband waited on me. He had got permission for a day out to look for work ; naturally the authorities did not wish to keep him and his family. He wanted some help to enable him to get another home. I offered him help on the conditions that he and the girl separated for a time, he to go to lodgings and to work, his wife also to go to lodgings and to work, I undertaking to pay for the care of the children whilst she was at work, and also promising to help them with some goods in a year's time if they kept to the agreement. But my conditions were not satisfactory to him. He went back to the workhouse, took his wife and children out, and they were afterwards charged with begging.

I called on the parents of both husband and wife. ' Oh, he has nothing to do with us,' said the parents of the former ; ' he left us when he was sixteen.' ' What did he leave you for ?'

I asked: 'We had not got room for him,' I was told. The girl also had left home when she was about fourteen. Neither had the parents room for her. Their story is unfortunately a very common story, for large numbers of boys and girls leave home because there is no room for them. Thousands of working men in London start a married life with an establishment consisting of one room, when with only common prudence they might as readily have two or three rooms decently furnished. Life is passable the first year, and during that year most of them might, if they would, enlarge their homes, for with a home of one room, and the husband not coming home to meals, the wife has very little to do, and is able for a time to earn money by her own labour. This she often does, but, as a rule, the public-house gets the benefit of it, consequently the home is not enlarged. Then the children begin to come; the wants of the parents increase, but their means lessen, yet by no means must the public-house be forsaken. I have seen many men completely astonished when I have suggested to them that they ought to have more room for themselves and family, and that the money spent in drink would easily provide it. The public-house has become part of their very life, and children may come in quick succession, the infants may grow into boys and girls, and the boys and girls into young men and young women, but the public-house must not be forsaken, and the amount spent on drink must not be curtailed. The sacred duty of the English working man is to see that the publican does not suffer. His wife may suffer, his children may suffer, they may herd together like animals, but his glorious institution must be upheld.

This is the rock on which the home life of working men is wrecked; yet it is not a hidden rock, for examples abound all around them, but the love of drink casts out the love of child, and the idea that present self-denial will bring them future good and lasting joy has no weight with them. The moral worth, business capacity and intellect that is lost to the

country because of this one evil cannot be measured. Born into homes of one or two rooms, born even of parents stupidly neglectful, are boys that are keen as the razor's edge, whose talents fit them for useful lives, but whose talents getting no training at home, and finding no outlet for good, very soon get trained for evil, for an outlet in that direction is always to hand.

Recently a small boy, not twelve, applied at the North London Police Court for a summons. The magistrate asked him why he required a summons. 'For wages, sir.' 'But surely you go to school?' the magistrate said. Yes, he did go to school, but he was errand-boy at nights and all day on Saturdays, and earned two shillings a week. It was Saturday morning, and he had gone to his work, but found another boy, a whole-timer, in his place. His master had not given him notice, so he claimed a week's pay in lieu of it. The magistrate gravely told him that he was not 'a workman within the meaning of the Act,' and that he would have to take out a summons at the County Court, and off to the County Court the little fellow trudged.

Now, a boy of that sort is worth looking after, and is worth a good many pots of beer; but it is dangerous to neglect such a boy; yet these boys, when about fifteen, leave our working men's homes wholesale; 'there is no room for them.' Nor will there ever be room for them until working men are prepared to sacrifice the public-house on the altar of home life. Great politicians, public orators, and even wise and learned deans, may boast that they 'never robbed a man of a pot of beer.' I would like to rob some men of a good many pots of beer, for I contend that any man who prevents home decency by pots of beer, any father who is content that his boys should leave home while still children because 'there is no room for them,' while he can find money for the public-house, is a traitor and a criminal; patriotism has no place in his heart, for the love of country comes from the love of home. What do such

men do for the good of their country? They simply take upon themselves duties with regard to children which they scandalously and wickedly evade. But the effects are far-reaching, and the country pays the penalty in minus good but plus evil. If parents would but understand, if they would but realize and know, that child-life in their homes brings responsibility and duty, and that the fulfilment of that responsibility and the performance of that duty—though they may cost anxious thought and much worry for a time, and though self-denial may have to be practised and the public-house dispensed with—will be more than compensated by the increased happiness of their children and the increased prosperity of the community.

One thing to me seems certain and palpable: working men cannot have home happiness and home culture and the public-house. The two are in direct antagonism. It is for them to make the choice. Will they make a wise choice? I doubt it, for has it not been said, 'They who drink beer, think beer'?

Nor is it the children of the poorest who leave home at an early age; for the poor widow, who is left to fight life's battle with three or four children, manages, as a rule, to keep those children round her, and her struggles for them are heroic. Sometimes, it is true, the parish authorities take some or all the children off such a mother's hands, but as a rule they keep their children round them. Day after day I meet with poorly-clad and badly-fed but plucky mothers, who, though working very hard, make a much better job of home-life and look much better after their children than many mothers who have stalwart husbands living with them and working for them. Very pleasant it is to see the boys and girls grow up, and in their turn relieving the mother's toil and caring for her. But the police court affords no sadder sight than a poor, elderly widow who has come to plead for a son who has got into trouble. One such scene is before me now. A young man, about twenty-two, stands in the dock, and by him stands an officer support-

ing him, for he has been drinking heavily, and D.-T. is almost upon him ; he is not conscious of what is said or what is done. In the witness-box stands a little woman with her arm bandaged. She is the prosecutor. 'The only son of his mother, and she a widow.'

Twenty-one years before the desire of her eyes, the partner of her life, was taken away. After following the body of her husband to the cemetery, she returned home and looked upon her only boy in the cradle, and, like one of old, she said : 'This same shall comfort me.' And so she loved him as only a bereaved mother can love, and she worked for him as only a widowed woman can work. The years went on, and the boy was sent regularly to school. No half-time for the widow ; her boy must have the full advantage the school could give, and he made good use of his time. Fourteen years rolled by, fourteen years of washing and charing for her, but now he must have a trade. No errand-boy's place for him. She placed him as an apprentice with a saddler. She could pay no premium, so he must work for very little wage till his twenty-first birthday should come round. This meant seven more years of drudgery to her, but bravely she faced it, and the boy went through his apprenticeship. Many a time during those seven years he said to her, 'Mother, you shan't work so hard as this when I'm a man' ; but they were years of happiness, for the widow's heart was full of hope, and the seven years went by.

Another year has gone by, but it has been a year of continued hard work, of unrealized expectations, of unfulfilled hopes. The climax is reached now, and she stands in the witness-box to bear unwilling evidence against him. The public-house, the fell destroyer of children's prospects, had proved the destruction of her maternal hopes. It is an old story, but a common one. His twenty-first birthday had arrived at last, and the men in the workshop had asked him to stand treat ; he had not much money, but his little was added to theirs,

and drink was sent for and the lad forgot his mother. The day's work being over, they all adjourned to a public-house, and on his twenty-first birthday, late at night, the lad reeled home—drunk. The widow had prepared a nice little supper, but it was untasted ; he lay on the hearthrug the night through. The widow sat on her chair, and her feet supported the boy's head. This was the beginning of a year of misery, for in the delights of drink and the fascination of the public-house he forgot his boyish aspirations and his chivalrous intentions. His wages were not given to relieve his mother's toil and to gladden his mother's heart, for drunkenness became a common occurrence.

Last night he came home very late and very drunk, but the widow was waiting up for him. A knife and some bread and cheese were on the little table in their small room. He did not want any supper, he wanted more drink. There was none in the house ; he would go out and get some. Placing her back to the door, the widow endeavoured to prevent him. He did not know what he was doing, and took hold of the knife. There was a struggle, and the widow's arm was badly cut. She screamed, and a policeman and others came in. Seeing the mother covered with blood and the son in a stupid, dazed way holding the knife, he was taken into custody and charged with wounding his mother.

In giving her evidence the widow palpably perjured herself ; it was transparent. She declared it was an accident, and happened as she tried to take the knife from him. The magistrate saw through it, but there was no other evidence. When the widow had given her evidence she came out of the witness-box and threw herself before the magistrate, calling out : ' Don't send him to prison ! Don't send him to prison ! He's a good lad, only for the drink.' Her testimony of her boy was true, but alas ! it is true of many. Home after home I have visited ; parent after parent I have tried to comfort ; again and again I have heard the wail : ' A good lad ! a good lad,

only for the drink!' The public-house is the limbo of unrealized parental hopes and the execution-ground of filial chivalry.

But the magistrate did not send him to prison. The widow, the son, and myself rode in a cab to their little home, where the mother and myself carried him to bed. In that little bed for some weeks he lay, not knowing what had occurred, but conscious that something unusual had happened. When the delirium had passed and he lay in bed weak and ill, I showed him the cut on his mother's arm, and told him what had happened; but he could not believe it till I appealed to his mother. 'But you would not have done it, Will, you would not have done it but for the drink.' Then he believed it, and, looking very strange, he got out of bed and kneeling down, he said: 'I call God to witness that I'll never take another drop.' No other pledge was needed. Years have gone by, and it has been kept; the widow's heart sings for joy, for she is cheered, sustained, and comforted by her son, and the full fruition of her hopes and his hopes has come. He has a small shop of his own, that does for him and his mother. He has taken to himself no wife, but mother and son hand in hand and heart to heart go gently through life. But it might have been different.

But it is not only the poor widow who is despoiled of her hopes and robbed of her joy through the instrumentality of drink. Time and space would fail me to tell of the shamed and sorrowing fathers I have seen in homes of refinement and luxury who have looked pitifully to me to exercise some magic power and give them back their lads. 'Good lads, only for the drink.' If the young men of our land could only see, as I have seen, the parental anguish, could only take some measure, as I have taken some measure, of proud fathers, loving mothers and admiring sisters, it were enough to make them dash the sparkling beverage to the earth in all the pride of its mantling temptation.

There is yet another cause that leads to much evil among boys, and to a great deal of trouble for parents, and that is the neglect of many parents to provide situations or work for their boys before they leave school. Scores of lads become criminals from this one cause. The day arrives when these lads can legally leave school, and they do it. There is nothing at home to entertain them, so they seek entertainment in the street. A few weeks' idleness, coupled with the undisciplined liberty of the street, is sufficient for the ruin of many lads. Once let boys whose only discipline has been the discipline of school be released from that discipline and no other substituted, and they will be in mischief, or, worse still, acquiring idle and shiftless habits that will stick to them through life. They become thieves or drones, and, personally, I have more hope of the thief. The number of lads that get into the hands of the police from this one cause is a very large one, and I more than suspect that every Metropolitan police court magistrate has commented upon the matter till he is tired. A large part of my time has been taken up in finding employment for such boys while they have been under remand or under sentence. Numbers of such lads are discharged by the various magistrates on the police court missionaries promising to find them employment. No one knows better than the magistrate that undisciplined idleness is the ruin of growing boys. Of course these situations ought to be procured by the fathers of the boys, and would be if such fathers had only the common-sense to know that financially it would pay them to see that the day after their boys leave school they are decently at work, not to be made into little slaves, but to acquire the habit of regular industry, without which their lives must be burdensome.

For good or evil, the old system of apprenticeship is dead and gone. It had its faults, but it had many virtues, for at any rate it insured a boy continuity of work during those years when idleness is fatal. Nor have we anything to take its place, for parental control and interest have to a great extent disap-

peared also. It ought naturally to have become more keen and active, but who can deny that the reverse is the case? Everything nowadays is to be done for the parents, and but little by them. So it comes that agencies and organizations innumerable are in existence for the purpose of doing work that ought to have been done cheerfully by the parents, or for undoing the evil that has been done by them. But can they undo it? Can anyone undo it? Boys from fourteen to sixteen may be sent to reformatories till they are nineteen years of age. But does such a course undo it? No; for if he behaves badly enough he is sent away, and if he behaves well enough he is sent out on license when he has been there two years. Many such boys get charged again and again, and many detectives tell me that the worst thieves in their districts are men who have spent a time in a reformatory.

Parental influence cannot be exercised by proxy. Standing as God's vicegerents towards their children, parents have committed to them a sacred duty and a trust; they have given to them an influence that no one can exert on their behalf. Reformatories undoubtedly do a great amount of good; unfortunately, they are absolutely necessary, they cannot be dispensed with. To take a vicious lad from his surroundings is the only wise, and frequently the only possible, course; but having taken him, he ought at any rate to be kept a sufficient length of time to allow of his acquiring industrious habits and useful skill which will fit him for becoming a decent and self-supporting citizen. An idle, dishonest boy of fifteen cannot by any process be converted into an upright and aspiring youth in two years; nor can he in two years acquire technical skill sufficient to be of service to him. But it is too late an age for him to commence to learn a trade; if he is kept the full time, till nineteen, he is then released at a time when he is neither man nor boy, and it is difficult for him to begin life other than as a casual labourer. When a boy has been proved unfit for freedom, and the magistrate commits him to a re-

formatory till nineteen, he ought to remain till nineteen, unless special circumstances are brought to the magistrate's knowledge and he endorses a license for the boy; for he, having adjudicated on the boy's guilt, and having knowledge of all the circumstances, is surely the best judge as to whether in committing the boy he meant one year or three, two years or four. It sometimes happens that bad boys, who have been sent to reformatories and whom the magistrate thinks are in safe custody and good keeping, come in a short time again before him on some other charge; they have been let out on license. Fewer boys should be sent to reformatories—it should be the last resource; but having been sent, they ought to be detained for the specified time to allow them to grow out of their evil habits.

Probably it would be better still if the law were altered to allow of their detention till twenty-one. There would then be a sufficiency of time to allow of their learning some useful occupation. If this were done, and a start were also given them on their discharge, I feel persuaded a greater amount of success would ensue. Better still would it be if all reformatories—adult as well as juvenile—were entirely in the hands of the State, for then a greater length of time could be allowed for reforming purposes. In the eradication of criminal instincts; or for the cultivation of good habits, time is an important factor, for good qualities are not like mushrooms—they do not spring up in a night. Another great difficulty, too, would disappear if reformatories were State institutions. Before a boy can be received at either industrial school or reformatory, he must be declared by a medical officer to be of sound health and constitution, and free from physical or mental defect. It by no means follows because a boy is weakly, has bad eyesight, or has some mental peculiarity, that he cannot become a criminal; the reverse is true, for just because he possesses one or more of these defects he is the more likely to become a criminal. Reformatories and industrial schools

have the right of refusing any boy, and being philanthropic societies, they are quite in the right when they exercise their own judgment. But it happens that boys with defects go uncared for, with this result, that their defects become more emphasized and their instincts more and more criminal, and ultimately the workhouse or prison has to receive them: A State reformatory, to which our magistrates can commit any boy, as a matter of right and not of favour, with the positive knowledge that such boys, even with their defects, would be kept, taught and trained till twenty-one years of age, would be an inestimable boon, and would confer lasting good on the community.

CHAPTER VI

RECORD-BREAKERS : JANE CAKEBREAD

A STRANGE being was Jane, or, rather, 'Miss Cakebread,' as she loved to call herself. Helpless, homeless, and penniless as she was, I question whether any lady other than the Queen attracted the attention of the public so long, or had so many paragraphs written about her as poor demented Jane Cakebread. For years all England laughed and grew merry over Jane, heedless of the tragedy that attended her, and of the cruel farce, so long drawn out, that was enacted with regard to her.

Queen of her domain, she held the field against all comers. Many were her challengers for notoriety, but they came and went, the grave closed over them, yet she held on. Her movements were regular as the motions of the planets. From police court to prison, from prison to the streets, thence again to the court, was the regular order of her life. Her quips and cranks, ready wit, and cool assurance, made her dear to reporters, and Jane became national property.

Vain to an extraordinary extent, she dearly prized the notoriety that a police court afforded her. To her the hum of amused wonder and scarcely suppressed laughter when 'No. 12, Jane Cakebread, your worship,' was announced by the gaoler was the very breath of life, and proved ample compensation for the discomfort of the cells. But by no means did she make herself miserable in the cells, for times and again have I seen

her in those cells with her little hymn-book, singing softly her old favourite hymns, or repeating aloud choice portions of the Bible; for she had a capital memory. Many a time has she repeated to me two chapters from the Book of Job which she had learned forty years before. Again and again I have seen her on her knees in the cells, repeating her little prayers; yet there was not the faintest suspicion of the hypocrite about her. I have seen her rise from her knees and pour out floods of blasphemy and obscenity if she had been in the least disturbed in her devotions. That was Jane all over; from Job to foul obscenity, from hymns to coarse blasphemy, from prayer to violent temper, were to her natural transitions, occupying but one moment of time. The changes in her facial expression, even when sober and at liberty, were most extraordinary. One had only to look into that face, with its little, twinkling eyes, its square-set, powerful jaw, and its determined mouth, to see in rapid succession all the passions and powers that dwelt in her strange body and mysterious mind reflected in it. Put a little child before her, and that hard mouth would soften, and the whole face would brighten up. 'Bless its dear little heart!' she would say. 'Shall I sing it a little hymn?' And she would begin in her thin old voice to sing to the child. In the middle of a verse she would leave off abruptly to pour out the vials of wrath upon some imaginary offender—and her wrath was something to be remembered.

Five minutes' conversation with Jane was quite sufficient to prove to me, at any rate, that she was an absolutely irresponsible creature, of unsound mind; not insane in the ordinary acceptation of the term, yet insane beyond a doubt. Her language in conversation would vary, sometimes choice, grammatical, and well-expressed, the next moment drivel, the next idiotic. I have seen her eyes light up with keen intelligence one moment, and the next moment be dulled with vacancy. When before the magistrate she was always at her best, and the knowledge that she was sure to be the cause of many

paragraphs next day seemed to brace her up for a special effort; and oh the dear delight if she could but make the majesty of the law to unbend, and cause a smile to appear on the magistrate's face! For that smile she would cheerfully 'do' her month. 'Mr. Holmes,' she has said to me many times, 'did you see me make the magistrate laugh?' And in the cells she would hug herself, and fall to her hymns and prayers with rare enjoyment.

Pitiful though her condition was, there was still an irrepressible gaiety about her, and a power of saying ridiculous things in a humorous way, that everyone who heard and saw was bound to smile at. The smiles would not only be visible, but audible, and having seen and heard, Jane would step jauntily out of the dock, bestowing her benediction on the magistrate, and assuring the police that she 'loved the very ground they walked upon.' 'Save me a paper till I come out,' she would say to me. I never did, but somehow she did get one, and carefully she treasured the little bits about herself.

Everything was for the best with Jane, and just as it should be. Everyone else might be all wrong; she was all right, though once or twice I have perceived a strangely pathetic look in her face, as if there was a glimmering consciousness that perhaps, after all, everything was not quite for the best with her; but on the whole there was a tone of confidence about her that admitted of no argument—indeed, 'argufying' was an abhorrence to her; she would have none of it, and I soon found that my only plan was to agree with her and pander to her vanity.

Jane was not an idle woman, but she had not the slightest wish or intention to do anything toward earning her own living. She believed herself to be a 'lady,' and prided herself on that belief. Very funny it was to see the poor creature pounding up pieces of brick to a fine powder. I came across her one day on Clapton Common while she was thus engaged. I asked her what she was making the powder for, and found she used it

for tooth-powder. She was proud of her teeth, and cleaned them regularly with her brick-dust; and, indeed, she had a set to be proud of, for they were beautifully regular and perfectly sound. I believe that on one occasion, when Jane was in trouble and was not behaving nicely, the attendants, believing her teeth to be false ones, tried to take them out, fearing she might get choked with them. She bit right and left, and they soon came to the conclusion that her teeth were best let alone. She told me several times about the affair, but she was always angry about it, considering it the greatest indignity ever offered to her.

She was a strange mixture of good and evil, sense and nonsense, sanity and insanity. Her physical powers were as strange as her mental, for she bade defiance to the elements, and laughed disease to scorn. If out of gaol for a month, she spent that month out of doors night and day unless I provided shelter for her, and toward the last I found this difficult to do, for no one would have her, even if paid well. During the great frost of 1895, for nine weeks she lay out of doors, her lodging the bare ground, her bed a bundle of sticks, her dressing-room the banks of the Lea, where morning by morning she broke the ice that she might wash. 'Ladies always wash in cold water,' she was fond of saying, and not in the depths of winter would she consent to have even the chill taken off; and when at length in the asylum, she told me with tears that they compelled her to bathe in warm water. Time after time I have at midnight made some provision for her lodging. I have found her in the early morning at other times lying wet through on a bed of shavings shivering with cold, yet hot with fever. When I have suggested the workhouse, she has got up and cursed me, and staggered away. Next day she would smilingly accost me in the police court, where she cheerfully awaited her month.

She had given herself into custody—a not infrequent occurrence. Jane was not a drunkard; she had no drink crave at

all, and when she chose could do without it. But the smallest amount of drink roused the worst elements within her; a pennyworth of four ale was quite sufficient, and after the nearest policeman she would go. The police often fled at the sight of her; they did not want to take her into custody. Many an officer has bribed her to go away when she approached him. I have seen policemen running away and 'old Jane' after them to be taken into custody. When she could not catch them, she would lie down on her back, screaming 'Murder!' and 'Police!' when of course they had to return and arrest her; but not an inch would she budge then till they had fetched the 'perambulator,' as she called the ambulance; and fetched it had to be, and Jane strapped on it, before they got her to the station.

During the nine weeks she lay out of doors she touched no drink, and no one could persuade her to take any, but the romantic heart of the old lady had been touched. A gentleman living in the neighbourhood left a shilling weekly at a coffee stall on Stamford Hill, that Cakebread might be supplied with two cups of hot coffee daily. That shilling a week loomed large in her eye, and became a pound a day; that kind act of pity on the gentleman's part she construed into a declaration of love, and she built many hopes upon it. She became a nuisance to the stall-keeper, declaring that she was being robbed, and not getting value for her pound a day. She waited and waited on Stamford Hill for the lover that never came, but fancying every well-dressed man that passed to be her love. Hope deferred made her heart, hopeful as it was, sick at last, so she got her pennyworth of drink and gave herself into custody.

That was characteristic of Jane. No one could do her an act of kindness but she built tremendous hopes upon it, and made herself a perfect nuisance to the one who befriended her. Some years before the prison doctor had found her insane—and here let me say that many times have our magistrates

remanded her to prison, that a medical opinion might be obtained as to her sanity—feeling sorry for her, I tried an experiment. By dint of much pressure and substantial payment I got a poor woman to let Cakebread have a furnished room, also arranging that she was to order her own food, for which I was to pay. I provided her with a complete change of clothes, and took her to her room. I naturally thought that, having been used to meagre prison fare so long, and being withal an old woman, it would not cost much to keep her. I was mistaken. Jane rose splendidly to her position. She was a 'lady,' and asserted herself. French rolls, new-laid eggs, prime cuts of ham, etc., for breakfast, were only the prelude to nice dinners and snug teas. She cost me over thirty shillings for food, etc., in a few days, but it culminated rather suddenly. I got a note from her in her own queer writing and spelling; I could scarcely read it, but with the aid of friends we at length made it out to be an invitation to take tea with her. I went. An expensive tea was nicely arranged, all at my expense, and there sat the poor creature in fine style. Her thin gray hair was plastered with pomade, and the whole room was redolent of eau-de-Cologne. She rose and bade me welcome, and I saw that she was nervous with suppressed excitement. During the meal she upset several things, and behaved most awkwardly.

I saw there was something exciting her, so after the tray was removed, I asked her what it was. It soon came out. Jane had fallen in love with me, and proposed that I should share with her the immense fortune which she believed had come to her. It was a delicate situation, and an alarming prospect, but I got out of it very well, and did not scorn her. I told her that I thought she had better go into the country for a few weeks while she thought the matter over, and that I must have time to consider her proposal, which had come so suddenly.

I got a cab, took her to the railway-station, and saw her safely into the train off to her brother, who, I knew, would

not be pleased to see her, for he was as helpless with her as myself. Six months she stayed in the country, and many were the letters she wrote to me, all couched in the most endearing language—they lie before me as I write, and bring it all back to me. She got tired of writing letters, and her brother got tired of her ; so one night at eleven o'clock I found her on my doorstep, and all her worldly goods with her—three brown-paper parcels of good dimensions. She always had them with her. Few people saw her at liberty without those brown-paper parcels. Many people have asked me what she carried tied up in brown-paper. Every piece of clothing I had given her for ten years was tied carefully up in those parcels. When her clothing got too bad, I gave her some better ; but all the old pieces were carefully treasured and jealously guarded ; on no account would she part with any.

In two days' time she bade a cheerful 'Good-morning' to the magistrate at North London, who promptly discharged her, because she looked so nice and had been away so long ; and before she could well speak she was ushered out of court. But that did not suit Jane, so next day she appeared again, and this time more evidence had to be given by the police—she had taken care of that—so time was given her to get in her usual string of interruptions, and Jane was happy.

For over thirty years this farce had gone on, and all this time a demented woman had been looked upon and treated as a confirmed inebriate. Of course she took drink, and plenty of fools were always ready to treat her, nay, even to entice her into a public-house for the purpose of hearing her talk and seeing the fireworks. It has always seemed to me an extraordinary thing that publicans who knew her so well, and knew what would happen, should allow her to be served on their premises ; but so it was.

Cakebread became a great nuisance, not only to the public, but especially to my family. As soon as she was discharged from prison she would make her way to the street in which I

lived; but she never could remember which was the right house, and as there was a number of houses exactly alike, she invariably began at the first and inquired at every one till she arrived at mine. After calling at one house, and being told that I lived farther on, sometimes she would insist that I did live there, and would make herself comfortable on the doorstep, where she would remain till taken away by a policeman. The neighbours began to look coolly at me; they did not want any of Jane's glory reflected on them.

Her appearances before the magistrate became more numerous and her vagaries more pronounced, till Lady Henry Somerset went to visit her in Holloway. I do not think that her ladyship expected to do Cakebread much good, but she did, I know, hope to put an end to the perpetual scandal, so an offer was made to Jane to live in one of the cottage homes that were being prepared for habitual inebriates at Duxhurst, and I was commissioned to convey her thither. The *Daily Chronicle* had for some time given special attention to her case, and on the morning of her release from prison, the morning I was to convey her to Duxhurst, Mr. Milne of that paper, together with Mr. Phil May, came to my house to meet with Jane and see her off. My wife had prepared an entirely new outfit for her, and taking a mantle that was intended for her use on my arm, I went to meet her at Holloway. This mantle did its work too well, for while it brought her readily to my house, it also made her more certain than ever that at last her long-looked-for fortune had come to her, and this made her intractable. My wife performed the duties of lady's-maid, and, I understand, did not have an easy task. Jane came down at length dressed for her journey, excepting boots. I told her that we had not bought boots yet, for we did not know her exact size. It was worth something to see the sixty-six-year-old woman pull up the front of her dress and look admiringly at her advanced foot and say, 'Haven't I a nice foot! Isn't mine a high instep! I take threes.' I looked at her

foot, and sent out for a pair of sixes, which she could scarcely get on. I introduced her to Mr. Milne and Phil May as friends of mine, and a curious time followed, for she became aware of the notebooks and pencils, and wanted to know what they 'were getting at.'

I was afraid of a storm, but Mr. Milne handled her with considerable tact, telling her that it was usual for ladies of quality and means to be interviewed and sketched, so at last she agreed to sit still. But that poor old face could not keep still. Change after change passed over it; all the emotions of her queer mind rang in quick succession their never-ending changes upon it, and Mr. Phil May had a hopeless task. Mr. Milne could get her to talk, and talk she did fast enough, but what a jumble that talk was! from one thing suddenly to another; sensible talk and silly talk; half laughing and half crying; sometimes pleased like a little child, at others raging with passion; tales of her own girlhood; bits of romance and love. She was just beginning to get coarse when I asked her to recite something for the gentlemen. Out came a long string of verses descriptive of the books of the Old and New Testament. Some hymns followed, and then on to her favourite Job, from whom she recited one chapter perfectly. As soon as it was finished she turned to Mr. Phil May and said: 'Didn't I say that correctly?' I have it on the authority of Mr. Milne that Mr. May looked very confused, and blushed when this question was put to him. I am bound to confess that I did not see that blush, but I am inclined to think that Mr. Milne wished us to infer that he knew all about Job. Jane talked about those 'nice young gentlemen' to me many times afterwards, even when nearing her end in the asylum.

I had bought a new trunk for Jane—an iron one—and my wife had packed it ready for the journey to Duxhurst. I called her attention to it, and told her it was time we were going. She indignantly refused a 'tin box,' as she termed it, and declared she would have a leathern travelling trunk, with

'J. C.' painted on it. Argument and promises were of no avail. For a 'lady possessed of £17,000 to visit Lady Henry Somerset with a tin box! No, indeed, not Miss Cakebread!' To end the matter, she gathered up her brown-paper parcels, went straight to Tottenham Station, and, with some money that Mr. Phil May and Mr. Milne had given her, paid her fare to Sawbridgeworth, where, in less than an hour after her arrival, she was deposited in the local 'lock-up,' and was next day sentenced to a month's imprisonment in Cambridge Gaol.

I suppose the governor thought I had proprietary rights in the half-blind old woman, for at the expiration of her sentence, he kindly paid her fare to Tottenham, and once again she found her way to my house. But the month in Cambridge Gaol had not agreed with her. She had evidently been treated with more severity than in Holloway. She seemed weak and ill, and was quite prepared to go to Lady Henry Somerset, and even to accept the 'tin box.' So we went, but go without her parcels of old rags she would not, and they had to go with us. At Cannon Street she was quite willing that her box, which contained good new clothing, should be put into the luggage-van, but not so with the bundles; into the carriage with us they must come, and they did. It was a memorable ride to me—poor demented Jane on one side and three bundles of rags on the other. She nestled close up to me, and all the time spoke of her money, and what we should do with it, for she really believed that at last she was eloping. She grew more vivacious, and her broken health of the morning seemed to disappear by magic. She had renewed her youth.

I left her at Duxhurst, knowing that she would get every kindness and be treated with great patience. I knew also that I had by no means seen the last of her, for I felt sure that in an institution of that character they would not for long be able to put up with her whims and oddities, temper and violence. I wonder how Lady Henry Somerset and the matron stood it for three months; they went through something in

the time, I am sure. So I was not surprised when I got a telegram asking me to meet Jane at Cannon Street, as they were obliged to send her away. Even Lady Henry seemed to acknowledge my vested interests in Jane, so I met her, and once more found her on my hands. I had to pay a fancy price for her lodgings in Tottenham that night, but for that night only. The next day she was conveyed on the 'perambulator' to the police station, and the day after she stood in her old familiar place—the dock at North London Police Court.

Her sojourn at Duxhurst had not been altogether in vain. Lady Henry discovered what the magistrates and myself knew years before—that she was mad. The medical officer at Duxhurst, too, found that Jane was mad. I acquainted Mr. Paul Taylor, the sitting magistrate, with these discoveries, and he promptly remanded her to Holloway, once more asking the prison doctor's opinion on her state of mind. This is what happened on the remand :

'At North London, Jane Cakebread, sixty-seven, was brought up on remand, before Mr. Paul Taylor, to answer the charge of being drunk and disorderly in Stoke Newington on the evening of the 20th instant. The appearance of the accused last week marked the two hundred and eightieth occasion on which she has been charged with drunkenness. Every effort to reclaim her has failed, and during the last few years, Mr. T. Holmes, the police court missionary, has constantly asserted that she was insane. Nevertheless, no doctors could be induced to agree upon the point, and the woman has been treated as an habitual drunkard. Last week a remand was ordered, for the state of the prisoner's mind to be again inquired into, and the following report was now handed to the magistrate : " H.M. Prison, Holloway, January 27, 1896. Registered No. 17,706, Jane Cakebread, is well known to me. I have always considered her to be of impaired intellect. Her mental condition has, however, so much deteriorated of late

that I am of opinion that she is now not responsible for her actions, and that she should be sent to an asylum.—GEO. E. WALKER, Medical Officer." Mr. Paul Taylor said, in the face of this certificate, he should order an officer to conduct the woman to the Hackney Workhouse. The gaolers endeavoured to remove the prisoner from the dock, but she clung to the rails and refused to go. "What have I got ?" she screamed. "I did not hear. I will know !" Sergeant Baker, the gaoler, said he would tell her all about it outside. The prisoner was induced to go to the gaoler's office, but as she left the court she screamed : "Tell Mr. Holmes to mind my box." Directly she heard that she was going to the workhouse, she cried and said she would not go. Mr. Holmes told her that it would be better for her to go quietly, and she replied : "Yes, you want to get my property—my £17,000—but you will not. I have got my proper senses, though they say I have not." Ultimately, after a struggle, during which she tried to bite the gaoler, she was secured on the police ambulance, and taken to the Hackney Workhouse.'

And so poor old half-blind Jane passed. She had grown old in the service of the State, and at length the State rewarded her with something other than prison—the lunatic asylum. But for the manner of that 'passing' Jane never forgave the police, for when very near her death, in Claybury Asylum, she referred to it, and said : 'Mr. Holmes, if I was mad, why did they take me strapped on the perambulator to the workhouse ? Why did they not take me in a cab, like they would have taken any other lady ?' And there was reason in her query. Sane enough to realize her misery in being surrounded by the insane —too insane to be fit for liberty or to control her actions. Nature had its pound of flesh, and her strange life ebbed out. I went several times to see her, and the last bit of needlework she ever did she saved for me, and I keep it for her sake ; the tin box that she so much despised is in my possession, and the clothes that my wife so gladly arranged for her are still

in it, neatly folded, mementos of the most ill-used woman it was ever my lot to meet with. Once again I went to see her, and death was upon her. She lay in a half-comatose condition, and as I bent over her and spoke to her, for a time I got no response. But I thought I would try again for some little sign of recognition; so I touched her, and said: 'Jane, don't you know me? I am Mr. Holmes.' She half opened her eyes for a moment, and said: 'You are a liar. Mr. Holmes wouldn't leave me here.' Even in death she had some kind of faith in me, and I am glad to remember it.

I had one other duty to perform, and on December 9, 1898, I performed it in Chingford Mount Cemetery. It was a very quiet funeral; the conveyance from the asylum drove up, two men lifted the remains of our 'dear sister' into the prepared grave; the clergyman read the beautiful service, and into the safe keeping of Mother Earth, and to the mercy of God, poor old Jane went, a solitary representative of the press and myself being the only witnesses. I have before me now an old letter, bearing the date 1890. It is one of Jane's. A few wildflowers are inside that letter. She tells of living in a cottage surrounded by fields, where the birds are singing, the flowers blooming, and the 'breases is beautiful.' And it was meet and right, poor old demented Jane, that the birds should sing when thou wert laid to rest. For on that December day the sun shone gloriously, and the birds sang merrily in the trees around her, and as we laid her gently down the breath of the forest came about her, and the breezes were beautiful. *Requiescat in pace.*

A few words will suffice for the history of Jane Cakebread. Born of humble parents in Hertfordshire, she had some schooling, but not much. After leaving school she went into domestic service, and ultimately became what she called 'a single-handed parlour-maid.' To commemorate the sudden death of some connection of the family she lived with, she committed to memory certain chapters of the Bible, the one from Job

having to do with the uncertainty of life. While in service someone left her a legacy of £100. That was her undoing, as she did no work again. She seems to have carried the money about with her and wasted it, or got robbed of it. Then began her life of so-called inebriety; the rest is public knowledge.

CHAPTER VII

RECORD-BREAKERS : KATE HENESSEY

KATE was an Irish girl, and there was no beauty about her. I met with her the first day I entered a London police court, and was afraid of her. I met with her many times afterwards, and the fear and disgust wore off.

There was nothing of the Cakebread type about her ; she loved not the precincts of a police court, and could never take her month philosophically. She would scream like a wild beast, curse the magistrate, and defy the police. Sometimes it required several officers to remove her from the dock to the cells, where her boots, if she happened to be possessed of any, had to be taken from her to prevent the noise she would make. Time after time she came, so we became friendly. In the depth of winter, with very little clothing on her, I have seen her sent to Millbank prison, where I have met her with warm clothing on her discharge. Two days later I have seen her again in the dock with the clothing all torn to rags. Again I have clothed her, and a similar result has followed. I became too familiar with her, for I looked upon her as a matter of course and as one of those for whom there was no hope, as time went on.

One morning she was in her usual place, curled up in the corner of the prisoners' waiting-room, when I merely bade her good-morning, and passing on, turned to speak to a middle-aged man who, by his looks, was possessed of a history, and

of whom I shall have something to tell later on. He cursed me, and called me a canting hypocrite. So I promptly left him alone. I had no sooner turned away from him than I heard the sound of a resounding smack, evidently with an open hand, upon someone's face. Turning round, I saw the fellow who had insulted me, and who, by the way, had held a commission in a crack regiment, lying on the floor, and Kate, with flaming eyes and bristling hair, standing over him. She would have kicked him if she had been in possession of boots, but that morning she was not, so she was proceeding to punch him; she might even have bitten him, but I pulled her away, and she went back to her corner. The man got up muttering curses, and said to me: 'That's the effect of your teaching, I reckon.' 'Well,' I said, 'I don't think she made a bad job of it.'

The fact was that I felt exceedingly glad that a blackguard had got his deserts, but I felt more glad, nay, even touched, that the Ishmaelite had some respect and regard for me. So I walked over to her corner and, taking her hand, said: 'Kate, it was very good of you to take my part. I am very much obliged to you.' She looked up—for the first time I saw a softened look in her face and a tear in her eye—and said: 'Mr. Holmes, after all your kindness to me, if I get locked up again, I will kill myself.' But of course she did get locked up again. As two officers were taking her up the Old Kent Road, almost destitute of clothing, she broke from them when crossing the Surrey Canal, and in an instant was over the wall of the bridge, and down she want. She fell half in the water and half on the bank, but, never heeding her broken arm or cut head, she rolled over into the canal, whence with difficulty she was rescued and was afterwards charged with attempted suicide. This was the last time but one that she stood in the dock at Lambeth Police Court, and I wish that I had a picture of her as she stood there, barefooted, poor, thin, short dress, her head enveloped in surgical bandages, her right arm bound

up in splints. Two hundred and fifty times she had stood there, two hundred and fifty times she had been sent to the refining influences of prison, to be redeemed and regenerated by the delightful task of oakum-picking, sack-making or scrubbing floors. Two hundred and fifty times the law had said to her, 'You shall not.' Two hundred and fifty times she had defied the law, had hugged her vices, and said, 'I will.'

But this time she was quiet and said not a word, and the magistrate, a wise and big-hearted man, did not send her to prison. He remanded her on her own bail, and she went to a place other than prison. It was summer-time, and there were flowers to smile at her; she could look through her window, and the birds sang to her; kind nurses waited on her; her heart became tender, and the scream of the wild beast died away. She had again to come before the court, when the days of her remand had expired, and she stood there clothed in her right mind. How long will it be before we as a nation learn that the human heart is like a bar of iron? Hammer, hammer, hammer it cold, and you can make nothing of it; closer and harder, closer and harder does it become. Only under the softening influences of warmth can it be shaped to a thing of beauty and utility. So the law may punish, punish, punish its Kate Henesseys, but the more and still more do its Kate Henesseys defy the law, the harder and still harder do their hearts become.

So Kate did not go back to prison, but in the country, many miles from London, she found a resting-place. Twelve months she stayed there, and those who had charge of her speak well of her; but they needed patience, for the passage from evil to good, from drink and lust to sobriety and cleanliness, is not an easy one; the old instincts will not die at once, and as a tiger lusts for blood or a caged beast for liberty, even so it must have been with Kate. Among my treasured possessions is a letter written upon a leaf from a copy-book. It is a strange document, but it speaks volumes to me, for it is from Kate,

and God shall put that letter to her credit, for she learned to write. What it cost her to do so He only knows. But her twenty-five years could not be given back to her. Nature's debt must ever be paid, for Nature knows no pity. So Kate's health failed, and, before I knew about it, she was back in London, broken and almost dying.

It was an ill-advised thing to send her to London, to step out of the station and no one to meet her or speak kindly to her, but so it happened. With an irresistible power the old instincts awoke. One wild night of debauch, one more conveyance to the police station, one more charge in a police court, once more to prison, once more homeless in the streets, once more to the infirmary ward, and death mercifully put an end to all, for Kate passed into the undiscovered country.

And poor Kate is a type of many. For years I have hoped and planned for such; disappointment after disappointment has been my lot, and though here and there among them I have been permitted to see in restored character and happiness some results for my hopes, yet oftener still, when I have apparently been on the verge of success, and have been encouraged because of someone whom I hoped to save, God has stepped up and taken them out of my hands—I never doubt to make a much better job of it than ever I could.

> 'For in a world of larger scope
> What here is faithfully begun
> Shall be completed, not undone.'

These wild, homeless women have always had an interest for me; their very hopelessness commended them to me. No one had pity upon them, therefore *I* must; no door was open to them, *mine* must not be closed against them. So some of the most notorious women of London have formed part and parcel of my family circle. I am glad it has been so, for my conscience is easy. I was there to try to save them, and I have tried; my wife has tried, and my family have always treated them with courtesy and kindly respect. For the begin-

ning of good in many a vice-cursed woman has come from a knowledge of the fact that someone respected her.

It was a direct challenge from one of these women that led to my offering them the shelter and protection of my own house. Susan Hurley was her name ; they called her ' Glass-eyed Sue,' from which I infer that at some time she had been possessed of an artificial eye, but she lost the eye, if not the name, long before I met with her. She was a wild, untamed Irish woman, and would fight with man or woman, police or civilian. I believe she lost the sight of one eye in a drunken fight. I noticed, too, that a good-sized piece of her left ear had disappeared, most likely in a similar struggle. I was visiting at a different court from the one I usually attended, and Hurley had been charged and sentenced to two months' imprisonment ; she was in the cells, and I was asked to see her.

She did not present a nice appearance ; she had been badly knocked about, and blood had flowed freely. Her dress all torn, no bonnet or hat, her hair anyhow, minus one eye, and half an ear, she looked bad enough for anything. I spoke kindly to her, but she pulled me up sharply with, ' Who are you ?' I told her that I was a police-court missionary. ' Bosh !' she said. ' Go away ; what can you do ? Say a prayer for me ! Give me a tract ! Tell me you are sorry for me ! I know all you can say, and can say it better than you can yourself. I know all you can do, and that is—nothing.' I kept quiet whilst she let off the steam, and then we had some conversation. I found that she was a Roman Catholic, and had been in prison scores of times, and even so notorious that no home would take her in, and that when last she made an application a policeman was sent for, as a disturbance was feared when she was refused. She seemed a clever woman, but was very bitter and sarcastic.

I was bound to admit the truth of her words, for even prayers and sympathy are of little use to homeless, vice-stricken women. So I wrote a letter, and addressed it to my wife. This I gave

to Hurley, and asked that when released from prison she should bring it herself, and Mrs. Holmes would take her in even if I was not at home. She took the letter, but did not look at it. She looked at me and said, 'You must be the missionary from North London.' I never felt so proud in my life, and now think those words the greatest compliment ever paid me.

Her two months passed; she came to my house, but she came drunk. When I got home she sat there blinking and stupid. I am inclined to think she took drink in order to brace herself up, and that probably she would not have come without the courage it gave to her. Anyhow, my wife took that view of the matter, so we lifted her on to a sofa, spread a rug over her, and let her sleep it off.

After a couple of hours' sleep Hurley woke up. She knew where she was, and said to me, 'You see, I have come. What are you going to do with me?' 'Well,' I said, 'when you have had a wash we are going to give you some tea. Take her upstairs, mamma.' And she was taken to her own room. She gave my wife the letter, which had been carefully preserved for two months in her stocking, from which safe hiding-place she took it. A complete change of clothing was given her, and she came down to tea. She had no airs or graces like Cake-bread, so the tea passed off quietly; but I could see plainly that my wife felt a little bit afraid of her. In appearance Hurley was enough to frighten a delicate woman, but in reality she was most tractable, exceedingly well-behaved, and one of the best workers I ever knew; there was no holding her back: work was her glory and her joy. For the first time in our married life my wife began to have an easy time, for Hurley anticipated everything, and left but the lightest work undone. She was almost too industrious, for while standing on some steps cleaning a window, she slipped and fell, and all at once the house rang with horrid imprecations. My wife rushed to see what was the matter. Hurley was just gathering herself up, cursing as only such a woman can curse, and between times

calling out : ' It's out again ! it's out again !' The matter was that her right arm had been dislocated so often in her struggles with the police and others, that it did not take much to put it out of joint, and, as she had fallen on it, this result had ensued. Fortunately, Tottenham Hospital was close at hand, and there my wife took her, Hurley using bad language all the way. After a few hours' detention she came back to us, with her arm and shoulder so tightly bandaged that she could not use it in the least. Being her right arm, it prevented her doing much work, and this rather upset her.

Next morning, however, I heard her about the house at five o'clock, and when I got down everything was tidy and the breakfast nicely laid, but Hurley sat there crying. I told her that I was afraid she had passed a bad night and was suffering a great deal of pain. She said she did not mind the pain, but she could not with one hand black the boots. I told her not to mind the boots, and that I would black them till her arm got right again. ' You won't black boots while I am here,' she said, and off she went, and somehow with her one hand she managed it. They were not very well done, but we all praised them, and she was the happier for having accomplished the job. That was the only time during her seven months' stay with us that Hurley used bad language. We never had the slightest trouble with her, and as we got used to her one eye and her scars of old wounds, we had nothing but pleasure in her company. Of my little boy, a four-year-old, she was passionately fond, and, ugly as she was, he was fond of her. It would not have been well for anyone to molest him if she were by ; she would have gloried in a fight for him, and even when she lay dying in Whitechapel Infirmary, nothing brought such a smile to her face as a sight of the little boy ; for, by her own request, we took him with us when we visited her.

I don't know whether or not it was our imagination, but her face and voice seemed to change, and certainly she became more human. I was looking forward to her having the home

of her own which I had promised her if she stayed with us twelve months, when all at once she told us that she must leave us. On being pressed to stay and her reason for leaving being asked, she said that she felt she was going to be ill, and did not want to be a burden to us. We told her it was nonsense, and that she must not go away on that account. She then said that she wanted to go to the hospital and get a glass eye, and when she had obtained it she would return to us. No persuasion had any effect; the glass eye she must have. As we never turned the key upon her, or, indeed, on any other woman, she went, and Henessey's history was repeated. A wild night of debauch, a fight with the police, one more committal to prison, thence to Whitechapel Infirmary, a pauper's funeral, and the world had seen the last of Susan Hurley.

Of her past history other than police court I know nothing. I never inquired of her, preferring always to shut it out, and to fix her mind and hopes on the future. She was intelligent, and fairly well educated, but where she came from and where her friends lived she never told us. Neither did we seek to win her from the Roman Catholic faith, and a card hanging at the head of her bed told us that while dying she had been ministered to by a priest of her own Church. She was a generous soul, coarse and wild though she had become. It was her generosity that led her to leave us. She had premonitions of the coming end, and wished to put us to no trouble or expense, and doubtless her heart went back to the faith of her youth and happier days. And so she passed from us, but not from our memory, for of none that we have known and cared for have we such kindly recollections as we have of the wild Irishwoman Susan Hurley.

But we have had women living with us whose presence did not conduce to our happiness, but rather to anxiety, not unmingled with fear, for whose departure we fervently hoped and hoped for a long time in vain, for we have never said 'Begone!' to the worst of them.

A frightful tragedy is compressed into the life of any man or woman who earnestly and sincerely strives to do right and yet is impelled by some strange inward power—a power that they never understand—to do absolutely wrong. Bordering for years on the verge of insanity, they form a more dangerous class and an infinitely more pitiful spectacle than those altogether mad. Clever, generous, and high-spirited, they are subject to fits of depression, unjust suspicions and violent paroxysms of rage, and woe be to anyone that offends them! When the period of unrest comes upon such, the least drop of alcohol sends them raging mad, and they become possessed of the ferocity of tigers.

Such was Annie Drayton. At thirty-six years of age she had been charged repeatedly, and in many of our courts. Her honesty was undoubted, her industry was phenomenal, not the slightest taint of immorality about her, with positively no passion or desire for drink, yet repeatedly charged with drunkenness, she constituted a problem in herself. She had never known parents, brothers, sisters, or any friends, for she was brought up in a school for foundlings, was fairly well educated, and had held very good situations. Tall in stature, and exceedingly genteel in appearance, she never had, although so often charged, the least appearance of the police court habitué. Her hair, prematurely gray in front, told of repeated pains in the head. Some wrongs, or fancied wrongs, that she had suffered had converted her into an Ishmaelite. Generally she was charged in the western districts, where she was well known to some of my colleagues. Several times she was charged in North London, and then I met with her. She had been in many rescue homes, where they gladly got rid of her; she had been sent to Duxhurst to be cured of inebriety; she assaulted poor Cakebread, and had to be sent away. She had been in Mrs. Bramwell Booth's home, and they had to call in the police and charge her with violence and wilful damage. She had been sent by the prison chaplain to the Elizabeth Fry

refuge, where she terrorized them, and the police had again to be called in. When in the cells she tried to hang herself, when in the dock she stood defiant, her eyes full of fury, her hair hanging down, her dress all torn and bespattered with blood.

So she stood one Christmas Eve, and the policeman who had charge of her told a terrible story of her violence. To my surprise and dismay the magistrate said: 'I am not inclined to send you to prison again; you have but just come out, and it does not appear to have done you any good. I shall leave the missionary to make some provision for you. You are discharged. Mr. Holmes will see after you.'

I was in a difficult position. What was I to do with her? No home in London or out of London would have her; to the workhouse she would not go. Private lodgings were out of the question, as she might half murder someone. There was only the choice of my own house or the streets, and it took me two hours to decide which. Ultimately I took her with me, trusting to my wife's gentleness and sympathy to exercise a beneficial influence upon her, though I had the consciousness that I was exposing my wife to anxiety and danger that she ought not to undergo. But a surprise awaited me. For the first two months she proved a treasure and a help. She was a handy woman, and could do anything in the house or with her needle. She was a woman of taste, and I had to get plenty of fresh flowers with which she would decorate the table, etc.; for she loved to arrange them. She liked to wait on my sons and to study their appetites; she was always making something nice for this one and something nice for the other. It was all right for the lads, but the housekeeping expenses went up considerably. After two months I noticed that she had quiet and moody times occasionally, at others an increase in animal spirits. Sometimes I saw the old flash of temper, and I began to be afraid. By degrees she began to speak insolently to my wife, and I was vexed. She went out twice and got drunk, and I had to carry her to bed. Still, I saw how hard she was

trying to do right and to acquire self-mastery. She had nowhere to go, and my wife would not hear of her being sent away. One day, however, I heard her grossly insult my wife, so I fetched her into my room, and this is what happened. 'Annie,' I said, 'I heard you insult my wife.' 'Well, what of it?' 'Don't do it again, or it will be the worse for you.' 'I am going to do it now. I want to see what you will do,' she said. 'What do you think I will do?' 'Send for a policeman, give me into custody, charge me, charge me. You are no better than the others. I should like you to do it.' 'No,' I said, 'I shall want no policeman for you. I can settle you myself, and this is how I shall do it.' I took her by the throat and gave her a good shaking. When I let go of her, she looked at me and I looked at her. I don't think she was the least bit afraid of me, but to say that she was surprised is to put it mildly. She was completely astonished, and presently she said, 'I did not think you could have done that.' 'Oh, that's not much,' I said, 'for I can do a great deal more if there's any necessity.'

I think that was the best turn I ever did for her. Of course, I had no intention of hurting her, but as I looked into her eyes I saw that she had mistaken my kindness for weakness. I thought the exhibition of a little strength might do good. It was the inspiration of the moment, and it succeeded, but I don't suppose it would often come off. But Annie behaved in a better fashion after that little affair, and she seemed to possess a growing power of self-control. Six months went by, and she left, hopeful and happy, to take a good situation in service. She was a most valuable servant, and could command the best of wages. She had applied for the place and got it, the lady taking her with full knowledge of her past life and present peculiarities, which I felt it my duty to furnish.

But Annie lives no longer in the borderland between sanity and insanity; for she writes to me from a lunatic asylum, expecting that somehow I shall accomplish her deliverance.

One short year in service—a year full of hopes and struggles, of desires to do right, and compulsion to do wrong; a year marked by increasing violence and strange delusions—then Nature had its way, and the gates of a lunatic asylum closed upon her. But the magistrate never knew what a task he set me when he asked me to minister to the diseased mind of that poor woman.

I could with ease write a volume about these unfortunate women, for their name is legion. As I sit and write I see them all—young women, middle-aged women, and old women. If I were an artist, I could paint their portraits, so real are they to me. I dare not give reins to my memory; I cannot unfold my knowledge. A great deal of it will not bear repetition; but I have learned to be pitiful and patient with them, for I have seen much that is good among them, and have found that in bodies given over to gross sensuality pitiful and tender hearts sometimes exists. Even they feel the dint of pity; to the touch of Nature they are by no means strangers. Self-denial, patience, kindness, and fortitude are by no means unknown qualities among them.

Some of the grossest women I have met with, who have been sent to prison time after time, and whose conduct and bearing was unspeakable, have had little children—one or more—whom they love with a passion that ordinary people cannot understand—children for whom they would die. Knowing the law and loving their children, they do not keep those children with them, but provide a decent home for them miles from the streets they themselves 'walk.' One woman that I know well, who had been fined many times, and had been sent to prison on several occasions, was a long time ago in a cell waiting to be conveyed to Holloway Prison for a month. I had known her for years, but did not know that she had a daughter of twelve. This time the woman was in great distress, and sent for me. She told me her trouble. She paid eight shillings a week for her child's board and lodging, and was a

month in arrears, and the landlady had been pressing for the money, and while in prison another month's arrears would accrue, and she was afraid that, not hearing from her, the woman would take her child to the workhouse. She wept bitterly, and begged earnestly of me to call and pay one month's money, that the girl might remain with the woman, promising that she would pay me every penny back. She was so concerned that I promised to call and see the woman, and ascertain what had better be done about the child. I went and found a beautiful girl, exceedingly well cared for. The woman seemed decent and motherly, the house was tidy and clean. I had a long talk with the girl, who was going regularly to school, and had not the slightest idea of the life her mother was leading. I suspect the woman knew, but she professed ignorance to me, and, at any rate, she had never hinted to the girl that there was anything wrong with her mother. The woman was poor, and the money must be paid, for I saw at once that it might be fatal to the girl's future if she had to be taken to the workhouse. So I paid the arrears, and, moreover, bought the girl a pair of boots, the only things she required, for of clothing she had plenty. I never expected to be repaid, neither did I trouble much about it.

Six weeks passed, and the mother came to see me at the court. She had brought me the money I had paid, and the price of the boots, too. I did not like taking it, for I knew she had obtained it by selling herself, and possibly by stealing; but she was insistent, so with much misgiving I took it, promising myself that when the time came for the girl to start in life it should be devoted to her use. Two years passed, during which time I saw little of the mother, as her appearances at the court became much less frequent, and finally ceased altogether. I called to see the girl, hoping to give her the start I had provided for. The difficulty was to find the mother. They did not know where she lived; they could only tell me the address to which her letters were sent. I wrote to her,

and the letter reached her. She met me, and agreed to the girl going to the lady I had arranged with. I provided her outfit, for the mother had got older and coarser, and consequently poorer.

The girl, now a young woman, has remained in her situation, is doing well, and is much respected ; the mother has developed into an habitual inebriate, and gets charged at other courts ; but she never goes near her daughter, for her work is done, because her daughter is self-supporting. For fourteen long years she had lived her life, and kept the girl, whom she still loves. It is her love that keeps her away, for she would not have her child see her as she now is. Down to a lonely grave she will go, her only joy to know that her daughter is respected, and will never know the life her mother lived. Can love do more than this ? Men will readily die to save others, but to live for long years a daily death, to be content to dwell in shame that a child may have a chance of purity, and, when that child has grown to early womanhood, to crush a mother's longings, and forego a mother's joy lest her child should be in some way harmed, is love almost passing knowledge, and it will be placed on the credit side of her great account.

Annie Adams was another of these perpetually convicted women, whose only hopes were centred in the life of her child ; but while the mother was in prison that child had been taken away and was being cared for and trained many miles away from London. To think of that child was heaven to her, and the hope of seeing it was ecstasy, but to realize that henceforward their lives must be apart, and that probably she would never see her child again, was hell indeed, deeps below deeps, and down she went. ' Evil, be thou my good ' seemed to be her resolve, and it was pitiful to see her : out of prison in the morning, the same night in the hands of the police, haunting the same neighbourhood, getting locked up invariably in the same place.

The years went on, and she got older ; no rescue home would

have her, for I tried them all. No corner of the world would have her, for I tried the various emigration societies in London, and though the necessary money would have been forthcoming to pay for her outfit, voyage, etc., no one would have her; so I clothed her decently and brought her home. Three days she stayed with us, and the thought of her child maddened her; the lust for liberty and drink came upon her, and about ten o'clock at night away she sped, on and on, for the devil lent her wings, till down in the old neighbourhood she found herself. A wild joy and a fierce fight followed. The next morning, when I went into the female prisoners' waiting-room, she lay on the floor with cut head and bruised face, her bonnet all smashed, her clothes all torn.

Now, Adams was naturally a kind and timid woman. When in the cells she was quiet, when before the magistrate respectful, when in prison well-behaved; but the devils of sensuality, drink, and despair had made their abode within her, and they led her whereso'er they would. The years went on and she still kept it up; bronchitis seemed to get fast hold upon her, and it was wonderful to me how she lived. Probably it was the frequent detentions in prison that kept her alive, for her name became notorious, and her record was next only to that of Cakebread. Again Lady Henry Somerset wrote me, 'Bring her down to Duxhurst.' Many might have considered that the residue of her days were not worth saving; yet I took her, and though Lady Henry knew that to receive her was to receive a broken, almost dying, piece of humanity, she received her. Two years she stayed there, and they were two years of peace. She proved docile, obedient, kind, and trustworthy. But again Nature had its own. She manifested symptoms of a disease that could only be treated in a London hospital, and she was sent for treatment. It did not succeed, and she soon passed away.

In one of the rooms at Duxhurst is a tablet kindly placed there to her memory, and it tells of her goodness whilst an

inmate of that institution. Somewhere in one of our great London cemeteries, deep down she lies—I know not where. Somewhere out in the world is her child, now a man. He knows the life of shame and notoriety his mother lived. For years, her hope was to see him, and to her doom she went with that hope unfulfilled. If he is 'respectable,' I at least hope he is not hard or bitter, and that he lets the knowledge that she had a passionate love for him draw a thick veil over the main part of her sad life.

But it is not only for their own flesh and blood that these poor outcasts care. 'Unfortunates' as they are, a divine pity for those who are more unfortunate still is ever one of their distinguishing traits, though it may be a comparative stranger that calls it into play. They have their own way of doing things; to better people it may not seem a nice way, it may not even be a good way, but nevertheless they do 'good things.' I have known very much better people do much worse things than some of these outcasts do. On one of the bitterest winter days I remember a number of women sat in the female prisoners' waiting-room in one of our police courts. It was a makeshift sort of a place, and only intended for temporary use. There sat two of these women, who were by no means strangers to the place. Fairly well dressed, but coarse and repulsive in appearance, they were equally ready to drink, fight, or steal, while to decent ears their language was not nice. Beside them sat a young woman of very different stamp, but of the same occupation. Her eyes were closed, her head was leaning against the wall, and it was patent to anyone that the hand of Death was upon her. She was nicely dressed and of refined appearance, evidently not a slum girl. Opposite to them sat a fearsome thing that had been a woman, now a piece of humanity—all disease and dirt—whose only joy was to absorb alcohol. She had been found dead-drunk in the streets, and taken on an ambulance to the police station. The other three had been found drunk and disorderly at 1 a.m.

'Look at that, lassies!' I said to the strong girls. They looked and shuddered as I pointed to the 'ghoul.' 'Look at this!' and I pointed to their dying companion. 'Which will you be?' They looked uncomfortable, but did not answer. 'Come!' said I, 'let me send you away from London, and you shall begin a new life.' 'And what is to become of her?' I was asked. 'I will take her to the infirmary.' 'No, thank you. We can look after her ourselves.'

I could not persuade them, and one by one, before the magistrate, they were fined ten shillings or seven days. The two coarse girls paid their fines and went into the wintry streets, but the 'ghoul' and the delicate one had no money, and were placed in a cell. Now, this particular wooden cell had a charm for me that the rest of the cells lacked. A street artist, who had been one of its occupants but a short time before, had whiled away some of his time with the help of his crayons, and had placed on the whitened boards the good old motto *Nil desperandum*. There, in good-sized Old English capitals and startling colours, it smiled upon everyone that entered. When I went to the cell to speak to the sick woman I found underneath the motto two words freshly written — *Deus misereatur*. They were written in a woman's hand, with pencil, so I knew who had written them. 'Tell me where your friends live, and I will go and see them,' I said. 'It is no use your going, sir. I know I am very ill, and I saw my mother last week, but she won't have me home again.' But while I was speaking to her the gaoler came for her; her fine had been paid. There in the gaoler's office stood the two coarse girls. Cold as it was, they were without their jackets, for they had left them at the nearest pawnshop to raise their friend's fine. I took them into a refreshment-house, gave them a warm breakfast, and told them that they had done a deed of heavenly charity and made the angels smile. I earnestly renewed my attempt to care for the sickly one, and send them away; but no, they meant to see the last of her. I watched them in the

street that cold wintry morning as the snow fell about them, two jacketless girls, one on each side of a dying one, supporting her. I saw them pass into a haunt of vice, and I knew they would be faithful unto death. In less than a month's time there was a funeral from that house, and though it was not the time of flowers, there was a good display; and in a cab behind the hearse rode the two girls, each holding a wreath, and each newly dressed in mourning. How had they got their new clothing? Five shillings down and half a crown a week to a 'tallyman.' How had they paid for the funeral, kept their friend, and paid the doctor? By selling themselves, by hunting drunken men and possibly by robbing them, by the help of other 'unfortunates,' and by getting into debt. And I had no word of condemnation as I saw them pass along, not though the girls courted public attention; nay, I had a lump in my throat, a dimness in my eyes, and a thankfulness in my heart. For I had visited at a house of refinement, I had seen a well-dressed, respectable mother, I had pleaded for an erring but dying girl; but respectability said, 'I must consider her sisters,' and that was the only reply I got. True, money was offered for the girl's needs, but as motherly love and sisterly sympathy were denied, I declined it, and left it to the outcasts to tend the dying and bury the dead.

The two are older and coarser. They are often before the court, when the police tell of their bad language and worse conduct, and sometimes they go to prison. Their mourning has long since been worn out or been torn to shreds, but the tallyman has been paid in full, and the doctor was not defrauded. *Deus misereatur.* No, the devil does not have it all his own way even with these women, not till the evening of their lives, not till they have become ghouls, not till they are left with but one passion to satisfy, not till King Alcohol has claimed them for his own—not till then does all goodness die within them. *Deus misereatur*, for it is a frightful power that impels these women to the streets of London.

Drunkenness with them is but the symptom of a deeper cause, and this cause is not alone the possession of the poor; women of middle age, wives of well-to-do and cultured husbands, mothers of many children, leave those homes, husbands, and children to roll in the sensual sties of London. 'My punishment is greater than I can bear. It is my eldest son's twenty-first birthday, and I am two hundred miles away. I must come back, if only to look once more through the window.' So wrote the mother of eight children to me. She had left them and her beautiful home for the wild and gross degradation of the streets; she had become one of the most notorious of our police-court habitués; she revelled in impurity, and down to the lowest depths she sank. So I sent her away, not hoping to reform her, but hoping that she might, at any rate, live a less scandalous life. To look once more through the windows of her once happy home she came back to London, came back to die in one of our workhouses. Their punishment is greater than they can bear, and the punishment that the law inflicts is but a small portion of it.

'Take away the drink, and they will be all right.' I yield to no man in my detestation of drink. I know its power and effects as but very few can; but with the great majority of these women it is not a question of drink at all. Mentally diseased, or sensually possessed, they present a hopeless problem, and unless science, in conjunction with human sympathy, can find some method of treating them as patients as well as sinners, the problem will go unsolved.

Such are the women who come within the provisions of the Habitual Inebriates Act of 1898. These are the women who come before our magistrates four times in one year. These are the women of whom the State says to philanthropic societies of private individuals: 'Take them off our hands. Cure them of inebriety. Keep them for one, two, or three years, and you shall have ten and sixpence per week for each of them.' And local bodies say: 'Take them, treat them for

the drink craze, and we will supplement the State payments by six and sixpence per week for each.' Seventeen shillings per week paid by the community, plus the labour of the individual, for sensually possessed or demented women to be cured of drunkenness! To such wisdom have we attained! Deliberately and emphatically I say, and I say it with some knowledge and great experience of these women, that drink is not the root cause of their condition. They drink because they must drink; their hunting-ground is the public-house, their prey the drink-excited male.

A friend of mine took a young woman of this class, who had been to prison a hundred times, into his service. There, with good wages and a comfortable home, shielded from the temptation to drink, with no possibility of indulging grosser passions, she tried to hang herself and was taken to an asylum. After three months' detention I brought her away and cared for her. She stayed with us a few days and left us suddenly, not to drink, but to revel in impurity. Sadly but earnestly I say that philanthropic societies cannot restrain, discipline, and control these women. The State, and the State alone, can deal with them with any hope of success, and medical men who have made a study of sensuality and dementia should have charge of them in institutions where they can be properly classified, studied, and treated, for the hopeless scandal of their present lives ought not to continue. But to commit such women to 'inebriate reformatories' for one year or two, and then send them back to their old haunts and old vices, is not only supremely ridiculous but stupidly cruel—ridiculous, because the community has to pay about fifty pounds for a penniless and homeless woman to be conveyed to and kept at a reformatory for one year where her condition is not diagnosed; cruel, because these women come back to the same old conditions from which they were taken away. The Act is but eighteen months old, and they are coming back, back to their sensuality, back to the wild and fierce grossness of

the street, back to the police courts and to prison—for this has been the case with several. Can it be right? Is it just to the community or to the individual directly concerned that a woman should be taken from her horrible life for a year, and at the end of that year be again launched into the abyss of uncleanness? The community, having borne the cost, has a right to demand, and I hope it will demand, that before any woman is discharged from any inebriate reformatory some provision is made for her, and that at least a chance of living a clean life is presented to her. If she accepts the opportunity, well; if not, the State ought to know how to deal with her.

The managers of philanthropic inebriate homes have a difficult task, for they must consider ways and means, and are bound to look at the financial aspect. They naturally want strong, healthy, and industrious women, for the labour of these must be an important factor. The conduct of each woman must have an important bearing on the morale of the institution; and there must be, I feel sure, the temptation to 'license' out the inferior and badly-behaved women, and keep for longer periods such as are decently behaved and fairly industrious. With the State these things can have no weight, for the State only can afford to disregard the conditions I have named. But the State, having the care of these women during their detention, might easily have an arrangement with philanthropic societies for the after care of their patients, and so prevent their discharge until suitable arrangements are made for their future.

CHAPTER VIII

AMONG DIPSOMANIACS

It is commonly believed, and accepted as an article of faith among temperance workers, that there is much less hope of reforming a drunken woman than of reforming a drunken man. My experience of both men and women leads me to the opinion that the chances are about equal. In both men and women physiological and pathological causes very often lie at the roots of their condition, and make it difficult—almost impossible—to deal successfully with the drink habit. Some of the best fellows I know are constantly getting into trouble, and creating terror and misery at home, not because they have any love for drink, or any uncontrollable impulse to take it, but because there is something wrong in their mental or physical organization.

I have studied these men, watched them, made friends of them, and the more hopeless I have seen my task to be, the more has my sympathy and desire to help them been enlarged. Ill-health, lowness of spirits, vacancy of mind, and often delusions, coupled with loss of memory in many variations, come upon them, and at such times they are apt to take drink, with terrible results. These men are not what they are because they drink, but the reverse: they drink because they are what they are. In a word, drunkenness is not the cause, but the result, of their condition. Doctors will not, of course, certify them to be insane; until, therefore, the State makes some

provision for the half-mad, their case is hopeless, and frequent tragedies will continue; for matters are often ended by murder or suicide, and sometimes the latter course would undoubtedly give relief, and even comfort, to the suffering and distracted friends. But the dipsomaniac pure and simple, the man who at intervals of a few weeks or a few months has a passionate and overwhelming, uncontrollable desire for drink, is a strange being and a pitiful object. Cases of this kind almost fascinate me, for they are such tremendous contradictions.

Time after time in my own house I have sat in front of such men. I have seen their earnest—undoubtedly earnest—desire to be delivered from their enemy; I have listened to the poor pleas for help in their struggles; I have seen them and felt them clinging to me as if for life and hope. But I have perceived at the same time their fearful cunning and devilish resolve to frustrate any effort made for them, and to get drink at any cost. I have seen their trembling, eager joy when they have obtained drink; I have seen their shame, penitence, tears, and remorse even after they have swallowed the drink. 'I am in hell! I am in hell! Give me a hand out! You tried to save Cakebread—save me!' So from the depths of a 'shelter' wrote such a man to me. I wrote to him, telling him to come and be saved. He came, white and tremulous from his last debauch. I found him a clever man and a gentleman and most powerful in physique. He was a chartered accountant, and undoubtedly clever at his profession. He had swept streets in San Francisco; he had had delirium tremens in the Transvaal; he had driven bullocks in Mexico; but go where he would, and occupy himself as he might, the drink fiend stuck to him. Back to London, friendless, homeless, with the fiend still in possession, he came. 'If I had the friendship of a man like you, I could conquer; I am sure I could conquer.'

I gave him that friendship, and he came to live with us. His intellect was in good order, his strength was magnificent, he seemed open and honest; so I felt hopeful. He told me

that the drink craving would not come on him again for two months, or perhaps three. He lied to me, for it was on him then, and at that moment he was lusting and planning for drink. But I believed him. He took up his abode with us on a Thursday, employment was found for him, and his duties were to commence on the following Monday. On the Saturday at mid-day he went to his bedroom drunk. I went up to him, and found he had more drink with him. For this we had a struggle, but he was too strong for me. So I let him drink it, hoping he would go to sleep. But he did not; he became violent, and wanted to go out. This I was determined to prevent, so I locked the room door. Then he raved and swore, and declared he would stay no longer. 'How dare you lock me in! What right have you to make me a prisoner?' he indignantly asked. I told him that he had come to me for his own pleasure, but that he was going to stay for mine, and that I was not going to lose sight of him till he went to his work on Monday. So through Saturday night I stopped with him. All day on Sunday I was out in the open air with him, when he walked as if a fury were upon him. Every now and again I pulled him up, and gave him a soda-and-milk, and by degrees got him fit for a decent dinner, after which he had a dose of medicine and a cigar. When he had finished it, he came to me and took my hand, and with tears in his eyes said: 'By God, Mr. Holmes, but you are a man!' Yes, and next week-end (for he continued at work during the week) I had it all to do over again.

For twelve months he stayed with us, and if ever mortal man tried to help another, I was that man. Every bit of intelligence I possessed, every bit of time I could spare—in fact, the whole of my being—was pressed into his service. He liked chess, so in the evening I played with him; he liked whist, so we formed whist parties for him; he loved books, so we discussed literature together; he liked church, so he went to church with us. If I went for a day in the country, he went

with me ; when I went for my holidays, I took him with me ; if he bordered on d.-t.'s I doctored him. When he earned money he paid us honourably ; if he did not, we never asked him for payment.

We all liked the man, but one night I had an experience that made me afraid of him, and we all agreed that it was time for him to leave us. He came home very late, and he had been drinking heavily. He soon discovered that the clock was making strange faces at him, so we covered it up. As he sat with us till the early hours of the morning, he produced a large bottle of eau-de-Cologne, which he drank as if it were water. When I got him to his room, he promptly locked the door, and put the key in his pocket. I was inside, and he kept me there. For an hour he paced the room, cursing the day he was born, and the mother that bore him. After a while he stopped in front of me, and said : ' Do you think I can help it ? I tell you I can't ! If I could, I should not be a man. I stood in the street to-day and called for you. I shrieked your name. I called to the skies for help, but they were dumb. I could have gone on my knees, and with my teeth have gnawed the very stones for drink !' There was no mistake about his meaning what he said.

Presently he stopped again, and said : ' Mr. Holmes, I like you, but I am going to kill you.' I felt uncomfortable, but said nothing ; it was no use, I knew, for me to ask for the key. I was, however, glad to remember that there were no knives or razors in the room, for I had previously removed them. ' Yes,' I heard him say to himself, ' I'll kill Mr. Holmes and myself.' Things began to look serious for me ; it was no joke to be locked in a small room with a homicidal madman for a companion. Force I knew could not avail me ; argument, I felt certain, would only exasperate him. So I had to try guile. I asked him how he meant to kill me. He was kind enough to give me my choice. I told him that I thought if my throat were cut with a razor, I should die easier, so he looked for the

razors, but could not find them. I told him that I knew where to find them, and borrowed the key from him, that I might fetch them. He did not seem to suspect anything; for he gave me the key, and I was quickly outside the room after telling him to wait quietly till I returned. I locked the door from the outside and went to bed. I felt persuaded after this that he was another of my brilliant failures, so I told him he must leave us, which he accordingly did. I suppose that some day his brain will become affected or his body, strong as it is, will be stricken with paralysis, for neither iron constitutions nor strong brains can escape the Nemesis of Nature.

At the time when this man was living with me I had on hand as fine a selection of dipsomaniacs as could be wished. One by one in the years of my work I had picked them up, and from different police-court cells they had gathered round me. They were mostly educated men who had considerable abilities, and held positions of trust, and they kept me alive. Some of the employers of these men looked upon me as a 'keeper,' for no sooner was one of them absent from his duty than I received a wire to that effect. Not unfrequently I had to effect a capture and bring one to my house for treatment. They were a strange lot, and their outbreaks occurred at varying intervals.

There was one who would go for six months and sometimes more, well conducted, scrupulously clean, and well dressed, an ideal picture of a well-to-do, benevolent, elderly man. I have also known him go for six weeks unwashed, and during that time never remove his clothes, change his linen, or take off his boots. He went down into the mud at longer intervals than the others, but when in it he stayed there and rolled much longer, and went lower down. At no stage of his drinking bout did this man become jolly, lively, or in any sense companionable. He wanted no one, he wanted nothing but drink. Quiet, sullen, and determined, he set about his debauch in a business-like way. He had been with his firm for many years,

and was a valuable servant who did not mind work. His employers thought much of him, and were willing to overlook his outbreaks provided they were kept within reasonable limits, and that he never appeared at the office with the slightest sign of a debauch, or of recovering from a debauch, upon him. He had a marvellous constitution, and would drink for six weeks at a time, eating little or no food, and would take bottles of spirits to bed with him. If during his outbreak he took off his boots, he would wander from public-house to public-house, winter or summer, wet or dry, without any. If he started his debauch wearing a great ulster-overcoat, no matter how the weather changed or how warm it became, the overcoat he continued to wear. Often he would lose his silk hat, and many a warm day I have discovered him without hat or boots, but wearing this great-coat. He had beautiful silver hair and beard, of which he was proud, and with which he took no end of pains when sober ; no matter how long his debauch lasted, his hair would go uncombed, his beard untrimmed, and his face unwashed.

The first time I met him he was in this condition ; he had been picked up in the snow about three o'clock one February morning, and was charged at North London Police Court. Without hat or boots, with matted hair and beard, blood-shot eyes and inflamed face, he sat shaking in the prisoners' room. He was described on the charge-sheet as ' A man ; address not tendered.' Truth to tell, he was unable to give his own name or to say where he came from. When I spoke to him, he looked up and said, ' Water !' I got him a full quart and held it to his mouth, for he trembled too violently to do it for himself. At two draughts he swallowed the lot. I could not get a word from him, neither could the police, and when before the magistrate he was dumb and vacant. The magistrate kindly sent him in a cab to the workhouse infirmary. I promised to go and see him in a few days' time.

I went, and found him in workhouse clothing ; his mental

faculties were coming back to him, but he was not fit for removal, being ill and weak. He could, however, tell me where he came from and where he was employed. So I called on his employers, who had seen nothing of him since Christmas Eve. They were pleased to hear of him, and put me in communication with his daughter, a very accomplished young lady who had left her position as governess in the country and had come up to London to seek for him, for nothing had been heard of him for some weeks; in fact, he had disappeared. The daughter went with me to the workhouse to visit her father, and found it a very unpleasant experience. As he was approaching us I said, 'Here is your father coming, miss.' In his corduroy trousers, his brown coat with brass buttons, and his brown Scotch cap, she did not recognise him at first; when she did, she nearly fainted, but ultimately had a good cry instead. I got fresh rooms for him, and his daughter consented to live with him, giving up her own prospects in order to do it. His employer paid his debts, advancing a sufficient sum of money to his daughter. In a few days he went back to the office, the same elderly, benevolent-looking gentleman as he had been before his debauch, with not a suspicion of drink upon him.

For three months he worked almost night and day, and then he was at it again. His daughter left him and went I know not whither, for I have never heard of her since. Again he was left lonely in London. I sought him, but could not find him, so I arranged with his landlady to let me know at once if he returned home in the daytime, for his lodgings were handy. At night I waited for him in his own room. He returned one morning about two, when I quickly took possession of him. About four o'clock he insisted on going out, but I had locked his door, so he had to remain. The next day I cut short his debauch by taking him home with me, and putting him under lock and key. This he was most indignant about, and questioned my right to make a prisoner of him. I told

him that might was right, and that he had got to remain. In a week's time he went to his lodgings and his work. For six months this time he worked well and regularly. He was a Roman Catholic, so I insisted on his going to his priest, making a full confession, and signing the pledge. This he did, not that it had much effect, for again, after six months, he was in the mud. I could not find him for a long time, and when I did he was penniless, and had, moreover, pawned everything he possibly could. He lost his employment; his firm would have no more of him. His landlady, too, would have no more of him, and so the door was closed against him. Penniless, homeless, and friendless, I took him in.

He stayed two years with us, regaining his situation and doing so well that the firm substantially increased his salary. He was saving money fast, but he became too grand and important for us, and left us for other lodgings. For a while he kept straight, coming to visit us every Saturday evening. His silvery hair, his deportment, and his irreproachable clothing conferred quite a lustre upon our establishment, and his visits were a pleasure to us; but his holiday-time came round. For this he made great preparations, for he loved to do things in style. He had not had a seaside holiday for years; his frequent lapses prevented the thought of such a thing. He wanted a cab to take him to the station, for his luggage was considerable—a trunk, two portmanteaus, a Gladstone bag, a hand-bag, two hat-boxes, all full. With a gold-mounted Malacca cane, a gold-mounted umbrella, a gold watch and chain, away he went.

About five weeks afterwards, at two o'clock in the morning, he was on my doorstep, rapping and ringing and calling out, 'For the love of God, let me in!' I went down to him, and a pretty picture he presented. Unwashed and dirty to a degree, with an old cloth cap on his head, he stood there shaking and trembling again, almost in delirium tremens. Every bit of his luggage and belongings, excepting the clothes

he was wearing, had disappeared, and the work of two years was completely undone. He had no claim upon me for lodging, but I took him in, and saw him in bed; there he made such unearthly noises, the neighbours got up, thinking a murder was being committed. They told us about it next day, but never thought the noises proceeded from our house. By the aid of light nourishments, frequent cooling drinks, and medicine, we got him round again, and he went to face his employer. I don't know what excuses he made, but, contrary to my expectations, he was allowed to commence his work, although he had been absent two months. Again he got straight, paid his debts, and appeared as a philanthropic elderly gentleman, goodly to look upon.

But once more the drink craving came and took him by the throat, and he was helpless in its grip. Warnings were nothing to this man, for when he was sober he never dreamt or thought it possible that he could ever fall again; others might, but himself never. Never could it or should it happen again to him; but it did, and again I brought him home, and locked him up. This time, however, he was too much for me, for he got through the window of the room with nothing on but trousers, shirt, and stockings, and in that condition this nice, elderly, silver-haired gentleman went 'on the drink.' I sent out scouts, and he was found in a public-house some distance away. I went for him, and found him with a stiff glass of brandy before him, which I quickly upset. He refused to come with me, and would not budge an inch, so I explained matters to the landlord, who refused to serve him again. Still he would not come with me. Calling for a cigar and a glass of lemonade, I made myself as comfortable as I could, and risked my reputation as a teetotaler by waiting a good hour for him. He must have suffered something in that hour. With drink all round him, the fumes of it increasing his passion, waiting, longing, mad for it, there he sat till he could bear it no longer, so he got up and said he was ready to go. Again

I locked him up, took possession of his money and thought I had him safe.

The next day, in my absence, he burst the door of his bedroom, went out and pawned something, came back and went to bed. When I got home, I searched his room, but could find no drink. I made him undress, but he had no drink upon him. I took away all his clothing, and then searched his bed. I found under the mattress a flask of brandy. When I took it away, I noticed a cunning look on his face, which I did not understand at the time, but I thought it strange that he quietly acquiesced in my taking the flask. For several days he stayed in his room, getting more and more drunk. I could not understand it, so determined to make another search, and soon found that he had completely fooled me by placing the small flask where he knew I should find it, but also hiding several large bottles up the chimney. These were now empty, and he was stupidly, insensibly drunk. I came to the conclusion that my wits were not sharp enough to cope with his, so I put his clothing back in his room, determined to let him have his fling. Again with matted beard and hair unwashed for weeks he went in and out; again the workhouse brought him up. This time it was his own seeking; he knew that I had decided to have done with him. He had pawned and parted with everything possible; he wandered about and could get no more drink, so, abject and ill, he went to the workhouse infirmary.

For seven long years I had hoped and struggled for this man. I had fought the drink demon with every resource at my command, and I had to confess defeat. The last thing I did for him was to get a change of clothing out of pawn, take him to Euston Station and pay his fare to a large Northern city. There Nature has had its revenge, for he lies paralyzed in a workhouse infirmary, waiting for the end. There his wife lives in easy circumstances, bringing up her younger children to hate the name of their father. She had property and friends,

and years ago she obtained a judicial separation, for when the trial came on he was in the mud. His eldest daughter I have never heard of since the day she disappeared. But about once a year a stalwart sailor comes into London port, and for a few weeks revels in the mud after the fashion of the silver-haired gentleman. Cut and wounded, penniless and shaken, he goes back to his ship, or, should that be gone, seeks for another; for he inherits the same passion, and is slave to the same over-mastering craving, as his father—a passion I have some reason to fear the accomplished daughter is not a stranger to.

God help all such! for who else can understand them, who else can help them? Moral force is of no avail; human sympathy, kindly interest, and earnest solicitations are of no avail with them. Sufferings and remorse, burning shame and hopeless poverty, teach this kind nothing. Though they know that the prison or workhouse waits for them, though they know that the grave is yawning for them—yea, though hell itself stood open for them—into it they would go for the chance of satisfying their all-compelling craving. And it comes upon them like a thief in the night, when it is least expected. To-day they are clean, circumspect, gentlemanly, even religious; to-morrow they are bestial and wallow in the mud. Education is powerless, culture is powerless, refinement is powerless, good desires are powerless, self-respect is powerless, before this omnipotent craving. As I sit writing, all of these men whom I have ever met seem to crowd round me, and they are all educated men—University men and business men, clergymen and ministers of religion, artists and literary men, men of historic family and doctors of repute—I see them all again in their hopeless misery. I listen to their appeals for help, and I feel again the dint of pity as I look into their faces. I know only too well that I cannot and have not helped them. I have but pitied them, and given them such assistance as lay in my power.

And but too frequently their own friends show no pity

towards them—nothing but stern and implacable resentment. Doubtless they have suffered much because of them, but what can justify a father in speaking of his son as 'the accursed wretch that bears my name'? for in these words a wealthy gentleman living in Kennington replied to me when I wrote to him concerning his son, who was a clergyman and a dipsomaniac. In the depth of winter, with his toes peeping out through his old boots, this man had sought me out. I had given him food and a new pair of boots, and out of pity had appealed to his father. I might as well have appealed to an iceberg. 'You may be able to work miracles,' he had sneeringly added, and not even a cast-off coat would he give to his son.

But the most extraordinary dipsomaniac I have had to deal with was the man whom poor Kate Henessey knocked down in the prisoners' room for insulting me. I did not have a promising introduction to this gentleman, but as I saw much of him afterwards, we became friendly, and he asked me to call on him. One morning, on my way to the court, I called at the address he gave. 'Not at home,' the landlady said. I called again in the afternoon. 'Not returned yet,' I was told. I felt interested in the man, for I had gathered from our conversation that he was an educated man of good family, and had been well-to-do. So next morning I called again. Seeing me persistent, the landlady invited me in, and asked me my business. When I told her who I was, and what was my errand, she asked me if I had a few minutes to spare. I told her that I had. We were then in a narrow, miserable passage, and, opening a door on the left, she told me to look in.

I took one step forward, and a pitiful sight met my eyes. A young man, tall, thin, and emaciated, was lying on a low pallet-bed; a clammy sweat stood on his brow, and his eyes were burning with an unnatural light. Only one look was required to tell that his sands were fast running out, and that

consumption had almost done its work. I took one step forward, and said: 'I am sorry to see you lying here like this. Can I do anything for you?' 'Only go away and don't bother me,' was his reply. I told him that I did not wish to trouble him, that I had called by his father's request, but that I should be glad to do him any little service I could. He said that he only wanted to be let alone that he might die in peace. Seeing that he was not inclined for conversation, I withdrew, and had some talk with the landlady. She told me that the young man was the grandson of a celebrated British officer who had distinguished himself in the Peninsular War. The youth's father was the only son of that officer, and had himself held a commission in a crack regiment. Their property was vested in trustees for the young man, the father receiving a weekly allowance and a further sum once a quarter. I was told how the father and mother, the youth and two sisters, lived in one room upstairs, and that father and mother had been away drinking for five days, and had left the boy to the care of his two sisters, one aged fifteen and the other five years. Being moved with pity for the dying youth, the landlady had given him that little room, and placed him there so that she might occasionally look to him. It was a dirty house in an awful neighbourhood. The woman herself looked coarse, and by no means tidy, but she had a kind, motherly heart, and had done her best for the lad.

Thinking a few nice grapes would be acceptable, I went out and obtained some, and came back to him. As I sat giving him a few, I heard the father and mother come in, and go tumbling upstairs. After a short time I went up to them, and, being invited, entered their den, for no other word can fitly describe it. I have been in many wretched places, but have seen nothing worse than their 'home.' The furniture consisted of three chairs—each bottomless—and a miserable table, on which were some stale bread and a dirty piece of cheese that the child of five (she had no shoes or stockings on) was

pecking at with a fork. In the corner stood a small iron bedstead, covered with a quilt made up of portions of old clothing stitched indiscriminately together. No fire was alight, but the accumulated ashes of many days choked the hearth. The atmosphere was insufferable; the father drunk, the mother drunk, a female who had come in with them drunk also; and the poor lad lay dying below—all this made up such a scene of grotesque horror as fairly made me gasp.

It was some time before I could speak to them, and when I did it was in no measured terms, telling them that they were a scandal to humanity. Afterwards, when I spoke to them of their duty and responsibility to their son, they began to cry and wring their hands, repeating again and again: 'Drink is damnation! Drink is damnation!' while the wretched woman they had brought in joined her maudlin tears with theirs, and repeatedly wished that her husband would give up drink. Day by day I visited the youth for five days before I found the parents sober, and then I brought them, sober and miserable, to the bedside of the dying boy, and there they swore before God to touch no more drink while he lived, promising also to make his last days peaceful.

A week passed, and the father received his quarterly allowance, and with the money I persuaded him to take rooms close by, and furnish one comfortably for his son. This he did, and one bright day we got the doctor's permission to move him on his bed to their new home. For another week there was quietude and some degree of comfort. My visits became acceptable to the poor lad, and in his better room we became close friends. I began to feel hopeful, but my hopes were soon to be dashed to the ground. One morning when I called, the bedroom door of the boy's room was splintered, the hearth-rug and other articles of comfort were gone, and his bloodshot eyes told of a fearful night. The drink madness had come upon the father, and he had broken into the room for anything portable and of value. He now seemed to lose all sense of

restraint, and from this day till the death of his son nothing seemed too horrible for him. The new boots went off his little daughter's feet; the elder girl was pushed into the street and told to get her own living; the dying son was assaulted and robbed of a little watch that was intended for a 'keepsake' for the sister. I shall not forget the morning after that assault. I saw at once that the poor boy was overwhelmed and exhausted. I asked him what was the matter. With his claw-like hands he turned down the sheet and pointed to his thin neck, and there on his throat were two red patches. Then he told me how the drink madness had come again on his father; how in the night he had come stealthily into his room, crept to his bedside, and put his hand under the pillow to take thence the little watch; how he had called out: 'Oh, father, don't take my watch!' and then made an effort to keep it, and how his father took him by the throat and compelled him to give up the watch, which he took away. During the hours I spent with him the boy told me such stories of their sufferings that I wept when I heard them; told me of the unimaginable depths to which his father descended when the drink madness was upon him, and told me, with half-closed eyes and burning cheeks, of the loathsome occupation his father would sometimes follow to satisfy that drink-madness.

One morning in July the message came to me that I had been expecting. The landlady of the house where they lived came bareheaded and breathless begging of me to go at once; for the young man was dead and the father mad drunk, and she was afraid there would be murder or something almost as bad. I hurried there, and found a number of people congregated in front of the house. The front-door was open, so I ran direct to Johnny's room. A desperate struggle had evidently taken place; the furniture was upset, the mattress thrown off the bed, and the dead body of the son lay on the floor close to the window. The elder girl stood confronting her father with a knife in her hand; the mother, weeping,

followed me into the room, out of which her husband quickly went when he saw me.

Briefly this is what had taken place: the boy died soon after I left him the day before, and in a very short time the father had pawned all his clothes and stayed out during the night, He came back the next morning at nine o'clock drunk, and went up to the room where his son's body lay, intending to take away the bed-clothing, etc. A struggle had thereupon ensued between the girl and her father for possession of them; and as he wanted the mattress, he had actually thrown the body on to the floor. A cheque for fifteen pounds was forwarded by the trustees for funeral expenses. A coffin was brought, but the rest of the money the father spent, never coming to the house till it was gone. More money was received from the trustees, and the day of the funeral came on. I had promised the youth to see the last of him and to be present at the funeral. The father did not come near the house that day, and it seemed as though the funeral would pass off quietly, but just as we got into the main road, he joined us in a cab. Soon there was a great shout, and a number of women closed around the cab; sticks and stones were thrown at him, and an effort made to drag him out and lynch him. He did get roughly handled, but the cabman, having a good horse, vigorously plied his whip, and drove through the crowd, waiting for us further on. There was no other disturbance, for in a few days the wife went down to the trustees and left her husband.

Three months afterwards I again met him, but this time he stood in the dock, when a serious charge was made and proved against him. The last view I had of him was as he stepped into the prison-van, to be conveyed to the punishment he so richly merited. So passed from my knowledge the worst dipsomaniac it has been my lot to meet with. Like Lucifer from heaven, he fell to the lowest depth, and evil became his good; for it is always so: the greater the height from

which a man falls, the lower the depths to which he descends. As in the physical world, so in the moral world, there is a law of gravitation. I have tried to understand these men, and I have failed to do so. I have taken some measure of the force that impels them, but neither I nor anyone else other than a dipsomaniac can realize in anything approaching its fulness the might and dreadfulness of the power that inhabits them.

CHAPTER IX

CRIMINALS

THE study of human nature is always interesting, but to study a criminal is an engrossing task. Anyone who undertakes this had better have no preconceived ideas; if he has he will have much to unlearn, for no two criminals are alike. Prison is probably the worst place in which to study a criminal. He is then under control; his actions are not ordered by himself, but by others, and he must obey. He, naturally, wants to make the best of his imprisonment; he, therefore, behaves himself, and his true nature or his fatal passion is not exhibited. When a dipsomaniac is detained where it is not possible for the passion of drink to be gratified, that passion lies dormant; it seems extinct, and the man flatters himself that it is dead; but when he is again at liberty, the lust for drink springs into active and powerful life.

It is just so with the criminal. In prison there is no possibility for him to indulge in his particular crime, therefore the lust for that crime is for the time being non-existent; but with liberty his lust again awakes, and the criminal finds, like the dipsomaniac, that not in protected retirement, but in full liberty, with every temptation around, and every possibility of falling, comes the time of danger; then the battle has to be fought and the victory won, if it is to be fought at all or ever won. At liberty I have seen such men; when at liberty I have made friends of them, the shelter of my own house has

not been denied them, and I have had unique opportunities of studying them, and of trying to find out what it is that leads an industrious and skilled man again and again to the perpetration of crime.

The idle, loafing criminal has no attraction for me. I like him not, and have neither time nor effort to waste on him ; but for the intelligent and industrious criminal I feel some degree of pity. I speak with such men, and find that they not only know right from wrong, but they can also weigh the consequences of their crime ; moreover, they know perfectly well that criminality does not pay, and never will pay them. Further, many of them, in spite of repeated conviction, have earnest desires to do right. Again, a frightful tragedy is compressed into the life of a human being who earnestly wishes to do right, and yet is compelled by some inward power to do wrong, absolutely wrong, even to the perpetration of serious crime. Take the case of a really industrious man, who has trained ability that enables him to lead a comfortable life, and who, moreover, respects himself, and enjoys the respect of others, a man who loves Nature and liberty, and likes to do kind actions and good turns to other people. When such a man foregoes business, home, comfort, liberty, and the opportunity of doing kind deeds for the sake of indulgence in one particular crime, especially when that crime — if undetected — can bring him but trumpery gain, what doubt can there be but that the criminal is possessed of some kind of mania ?

Kleptomania, dipsomania, and homicidal mania by no means exhaust the category of criminal manias that affect humanity. I have noticed for years that many criminals are charged again and again with a repetition of one kind of offence. Some people are born thieves, and will steal on any and every occasion possible anything they can lay their hands on ; but the men and women I have in mind are altogether of a different class, and limit their thefts to one particular article, never

stealing any other, and, what is more important, never feeling any inclination or temptation to steal any other article or class of goods.

Only a short time back an exceedingly well-dressed man stood in the dock at North London charged with stealing a watch from a jeweller's shop. He was of middle age, and quite intellectual in appearance. His frock-coat with silk facings, his silk hat, gloves, etc., all combined to make him as unlike a criminal as possible; yet when arrested with the watch in his possession, he told the police at once that he was well known at Scotland Yard; and so it proved, for there were nine convictions against him. He had been at liberty for over two years, and had lived honestly. His father, who was exceedingly well-to-do, and was much respected in his profession before he retired from business, allowed him sufficient money monthly to live upon. In conversation with him, I learned his father's address and the address where he himself had been living. I wrote to his father, and the reply I got was full of pity and love. He had no hard words of condemnation to say about his son; he was very sorry, but he could not understand his son's inexplicable mania for stealing watches. There was no necessity for him to steal a watch. His father had provided him with one, and allowed him a sufficiency of money, for he was not in poverty. I saw the people with whom he lodged, and they spoke in the highest terms of him. For two years he had lived with them, and had won their esteem and love; they had not the least idea that he had ever been convicted. Yet eight times he had been convicted for watch-stealing. His first offence was stealing a watch when quite a young man. After his discharge, his friends got him an appointment on a ship making long voyages, and he was away two years. No sooner does he come back to England, than again he is in trouble for watch-stealing, an offence that he has repeated so often that now, when over forty years of age, he finds himself in prison for the ninth time for the same

offence. He sat crying in the cell after his last conviction, when I called him to me and begged of him to tell me why he stole watches. He could not speak for a time, and then he said: 'I don't know, indeed I don't. Yesterday I was a happy man, and now I am here.' 'But tell me how it happened.' 'All I can tell you,' he said, 'is that as I was going along the street and passing the jeweller's shop, something said to me, "Go in and get a watch! Go in and get a watch!" and I had to go in and get one.' But he got it in such an unspeakably clumsy and blundering way that it was impossible for him to escape arrest.

Now, this man is a type of many; for to my knowledge there are large numbers of criminals who commit but one sort of offence, and are in every other direction honest and decent citizens. Here is a good-looking middle-aged woman whom I have known for years, and who twenty times at least has been sent to varying terms of imprisonment. An incorrigible shoplifter she is called, and so I thought her till I came to understand her. Repeatedly as she was charged, the pathos of the whole thing grew upon me; for her silence in the dock and her tears in the cells were irresistible, so we became friends, and she told me her secret. When she came out of prison I found her decent lodgings, hired a sewing-machine, and secured her plenty of work. She was not idle, and was soon beyond the necessity of stealing. I flattered myself we were on the way to success, and I said to her, 'Your devil shall be cast out!' when all of a sudden the old offence was repeated, and again to prison she went. My heart went out to the wretched woman as she sat weeping in the cell. I could not condemn her, for I knew. With a piteous look into my face she said, 'Don't blame me, Mr. Holmes, don't blame me; I can't help it. I would if I could, but I must steal boots.' Knowing this, I had provided her liberally with boots to minimize the temptation, but all in vain; so far as I could ascertain she had not stolen anything but boots. I determined to try a new plan

with her, so when she had served her term I sent her into the country to work I had secured for her, hoping that change of scene and air might have a good influence. She wrote me several letters, and sent me flowers and fruit, but in every letter she wrote me boots were referred to, and in one, otherwise lucid, she mentioned them without much reason four times. She was not in need of boots, and though I knew it was not of much use, I sent her a pair, but they did not prevent her from stealing others, and far away from London she was sent to a month's imprisonment. And so I suppose it will go on to the end of the chapter, for she came back to London, and though I have not seen her since, and have heard but once from her, I have not the slightest doubt that she is in prison for her old and oft-repeated offence.

But other manias, and much more dangerous and serious than watch or boot stealing, exist, as I have found out to my sorrow. Seven years ago a little man was waiting for me outside the police court. He wanted a helping hand, he said, and had been advised to come to me. I looked at him, and saw at once that he had character and backbone. He was about five feet four in height, slightly built, and straight as an arrow, evidently full of nervous energy, but his eyes told me plainly that he had spent many years in prison. 'What was your last stretch?' I said to him. 'Fifteen years!' 'Burglary?' 'Yes.' I knew by his sentence that it was not his first term by any means, and on inquiry I found that though only forty years of age he had been sentenced to more than twenty-five years' imprisonment and penal servitude at different times for burglary. He had been released in May, and it was now the end of June. With his gratuity he had bought a decent suit of clothes. He had, he said, tramped London over to look for work, and now he found himself footsore, helpless, and penniless. He'd had enough of prison; he did not want to go back there. I looked closely at him and felt the dint of pity, for I saw he had industry and talent. So I gave him my hand,

telling him that it should not be my fault if ever again he saw the inside of a prison's walls.

The redemption of that promise cost me much, but it taught me much; it has shown me how good and evil exist side by side, and it has taught me that tenderness, pity, and love may dwell in the heart of the fearless criminal. It has taught me how hopeless is the lot of the released criminal unless personal friendship be accorded him. He was a bookbinder, and I could not get him work. He had a wife, and it was expensive work keeping the pair. He was anxious to work, and my failure to procure it disheartened him. I wrote scores of letters for him, and made calls upon some firms, but no one would have him. 'Not in the union!' said some. 'Discharging hands!' said others. 'Could not have a man like that at any price!' said a third. 'It's no use,' he said bitterly; 'you see you can't get me work. I shall have to go back to it.' I found a way out of the difficulty by buying him tools and materials, and setting him up in business for himself. He was a splendid workman, who could not do a slovenly job. I and my sons kept him going for a month, and then, having various specimens of his work, we canvassed for orders, and work became plentiful. But I learned much in that canvassing. I called upon a number of very good religious people—indeed, their goodness almost overpowered me, so effusive were they in their good wishes and promises of work—work that never came save in two instances, when it was expressly stipulated that I should myself fetch away and return the work to them when it was finished, and I was positively to keep their address secret; they were afraid of being burgled. Yet they had shaken hands with me and said, 'God bless you, God bless you in your efforts for the poor fellow!' When I returned the work, they complained about the price. So I charged them less, and made it up myself. They were not prepared to risk much more than prayers on his salvation.

I was glad when work became plentiful, and such customers

could be dispensed with. For it did become plentiful. Several of our London magistrates gave him good work, and took a great interest in him. He was a constant visitor (for work) at the house of one of our judges. Many clergymen in North London treated him with confidence and respect, leaving him alone in their libraries for hours. Several of them called on him more than once, presumably about work, but in reality to strengthen and confirm him. Exact, methodical, industrious beyond measure, honest in his dealings, he was to me a friend, a study, and a delight. I never talked his past over with him, preferring to centre his hopes and his thoughts on the future. He spent many hours in my house, and one night over a pipe his secret came out. I told him that I could not understand how such an intelligent, industrious, skilful workman as he was could be a burglar. He not only knew it was wrong and a crime, but he also knew it was folly, and could not pay. He looked at me for a moment, and then said: 'You have seen the power of drink; you know the fascination of gambling. Bring drink, gambling, horse-racing, and roll them into one, and they do not equal the fascination of burglary. The silence of the night, every sense on the alert, the element of danger, the chances of failure and success, all combine to make burglary a fascination. Why do some men get drunk? Because they must. So I was a burglar because I was compelled to be a burglar.'

There was no doubt about the truth of this; it admitted of no argument, for his manner of saying it was convincing. But it troubled me, for I felt that the demon might not be dead, but only sleeping, while he himself laughed at the idea that he could again commit burglary. I had misgivings, and began to cast about for some new weapon wherewith to fight his enemy. He was then living and working in one furnished room, for beyond his tools, etc., he had no goods. After he left me I said to myself: 'This man wants a stake in society—something to lose.' I provided that something next morning, for

I took an unfurnished house for him. I stood security for sufficient goods to furnish it nicely, the payments to extend over two years. He and his wife moved in, taking with them the tools, and when I called on them in their new home both of them cried like children. I explained to him the conditions on which the goods would belong to him, and what pride he would feel and what satisfaction he would enjoy when he felt his home was his own, the result of his own honest labours. Satisfaction! Why, he felt ecstatic joy at the thought of it; his eyes fairly glistened, and he told me that he would never waste a penny or an hour till he had paid for everything. 'Yes,' I said, 'and when you have worked for the goods, and paid for them, and they are your own, how would you like some rascally burglar to rap you on the head some night, and then clear your home out.' 'Well,' he said, 'that's a shrewd hit, but he had better not try it.' I said no more to him, but stayed for a cup of tea, when we drank success to his new home.

Next morning he was waiting for me at the court; he wanted to speak to me. He looked rather queer, so I asked him what he wanted to say to me. 'I want to know whether you expect me to make a profession of religion because you have got me a home?' 'Why do you ask?' 'Because I think it right to tell you straightly that I do not believe in God or devil, and I don't think you would if you had been in prison, as I have. I can't make any profession.' I looked at him and said: 'We will leave God out of the question, but you won't have to search far for the devil, and remember this, that when you have found him he is an ass.' I told him further that all I asked at present was that he should be as loyal to me as he would be to one of his old pals, when he said: 'Mr. Holmes, if I ever do a dishonest action, I will bring you the key of the house, and tell you about it.'

I kept him well supplied with work, and there was no holding him back, for he worked too hard, and kept at it on Sundays

till I found it out and stopped him. In twelve months he had paid every debt, and the goods were his own; more than this, he had won the confidence and respect of all who knew him. He was a most tender-hearted fellow; he would not kill a beetle or cockroach. I met him at his door one day with one in his hand, which he threw away into a place of safety. When I asked him why he did not kill it, he said: 'Why shouldn't the poor beggar live? The world is big enough.' About that time our only daughter lay dying. Towards midnight he came two miles to inquire about her, and the next morning before eight o'clock he came again, but when he saw the drawn blinds he went away silently. When we buried the lassie, I saw him in the cemetery, and after we had left the grave, he approached it and placed his offering of flowers, without card or name, among the rest.

Two years passed, during which time I found him just and honourable in his dealings; but trouble began, for his wife turned out a terrible drunkard. She was a clever woman, who could do anything with her needle, and was of great help to him in his work. I knew that she had a past, for it was written in her face, and many a time when I have seen them happy together in their nice home my heart has been glad, for I felt that I was saving two. But the novelty of the husband's return wore off, the joy of a woman in the possession of a decent home paled, and after two years' sobriety the old drink craving asserted the mastery, and she became sometimes pig and sometimes tigress. Scenes ensued, and many times he came to my house till her drunken fury had passed; but he would not leave her, declaring that it was most likely his fault that she was as she was. At length it culminated in her striking him one day in her frenzy because he had refused her money for drink.

That night he broke into a boot warehouse, and was caught in the act. He had been with the judge previously mentioned in the morning, and had brought away plenty of work; at

night he was in the hands of the police. Five pounds of his own earnings were found on him when he was searched. A sentence of three years was imposed, his ticket-of-leave was revoked, and he had in all seven years to serve. 'Don't think too badly of me. You know I have fallen; you know why I have fallen; but you do not know—you cannot know—the hundreds of times that I have put the horrible temptation from me.' Thus he wrote me, and I believed him. Not one word of condemnation had he for his wretched wife. Her remorse was dreadful to see, but it only drove her to drink the more, and in a few weeks the nice little home went. Not a vestige remained, and the forlorn wretch was again out upon the streets, a homeless wanderer and a drink-smitten vagrant; but not for long, for she soon disappeared as completely as the home—into the grave or some workhouse infirmary in all probability.

At intervals during his three years the man wrote to me from a convict settlement, and slowly for him those three years must have passed. But they ended at length, and some circumstances in his favour having come to my knowledge, they were placed, through the help of one of our magistrates, before the Home Secretary, who most kindly released him again on ticket-of-leave. And so he came back to me.

Back; but how changed! Men must, I know, be punished; detained in prison they unfortunately must be; but is it good to turn them into wild animals? I was speechless at the sight of him. 'What is the matter?' he asked. 'Matter, man! Turn round and look in that glass!' He did so, and then sat down and, covering his face with his hands, cried like a child. He had not seen the reflection of himself for three years, and he was horrified at himself. I ask again, Is it right to send long-term men out of prison in such condition and appearance? Their prison-made clothing is of itself enough to damn them; the material is bad enough, but the cut and make are worse, while their underwear has no semblance of make about it, and

this man's would have probably fitted a man quite twice his size. The hair upon his head was little more than equal in length to the hair on his face, and in both cases it stood at right angles. It is cruel, it is wrong—nay, it is more, for it is silly to turn men out of prison in such guise, and expect them to go straight and to reform. There is, I know, a redeeming influence to a man that is down, especially to a man of taste, in a clean, well-fitting shirt. I know more, for I have seen some men find positive salvation in a well-made, nicely-fitting suit of clothes. Anything which helps a man to feel some degree of self-respect is helpful to him; anything which detracts from self-respect does but the more debase him, and render his position the more hopeless. The utter absurdity of it is the more proclaimed when it is certain that the cost of this man's outfit, if reasonably expended, would have provided him with decent clothing, which he would have respected, and which would not have proclaimed to the world that its wearer had been a long time in prison.

The criminal, having been punished, ought not to be branded, and it is about time that the combined wisdom of our authorities found some plan of reasonably and decently clothing such prisoners when discharged. The matter is very simple and certainly not expensive, but it is of vast importance; for good intentions, hopes and resolutions wither and die in the mind and heart when the body is habited in prison-made clothes. Such men carry the prison about with them, and cannot get free of its influence. And in all conscience a few years in prison brand a man quite enough without adding to it stubbly beards, upright hair, and peculiar clothing! How is it that a man's facial expression changes during a long detention? How is it that his voice becomes hard and unnatural? How is it that his eyes become shifty, cunning, and wild? It is no fault of the prison officials; they cannot help these things; from the governor downwards they are not to blame. It is not because of hard work. From conversation with, and know-

ledge of, such men, I gather that some of them at any rate would be thankful for more work. It is the system that does it, the long-continued, soul-and-mind-destroying monotony, the long, silent nights in which for hours men lie awake thinking, thinking, thinking, driven in upon themselves and to be their own selves' only companion. No interchange of ideas is possible, no sound of human voices comes to call forth their own, and their own vocal organs rust. Nor does returning day bring change, nothing but the same duties, performed in the same way, at the same hour, and the same food, in the same quantities, served in the same demoralizing way. They become strangers to the usages of civilized society, and devour their food even as the beasts, but not with the wild beast's relish. To the use of knife and fork they become strangers; to a knowledge of their own lineaments they become strangers; to high thoughts, amiable words, courtesy, love of truth, and all that makes a man they become strangers, for these virtues cannot dwell with senseless monotony. But if these things die of atrophy, other but less desirable qualities are developed. A low cunning takes their place; the wits are sharpened to deceive or to gain small ends; hypocrisy is developed, and men come out of prison hating it, loathing it, but less fitted to perform the duties of life than when they entered it.

Punishment, I say, there must be. Prisoners we shall continue to have; but surely it would be merciful and just, and therefore it would be wise, to give these men some legitimate hope of a little relief from their manhood-slaying monotony. And here I would suggest a radical reform, *i.e.*, abolish the ticket-of-leave system; let the judge's sentence of so long a time be a final one, unless for good reasons the Home Secretary intervenes. Judges are not now vindictive, and probably shorter terms will be the rule. Let the prisoner know that there will be no shortening of his sentence, but let him also know that good behaviour, industry, and courtesy will bring him a reward, and that after a fixed time he will be placed in

a higher class. Let him know that better food, better and more abundant literature (not too 'goody'), some social recreation and some relaxation from dead monotony, will be his reward. Let him know that more interesting work awaits him. Let him know that he shall have a chance of seeing the likeness of his own face, of hearing his own voice, of being fed as a human being, and, my life for it, you shall inspire many a man to hope. Hope takes to herself many virtues, for with hope all things are possible for good, but without that saving grace all things are possible for evil.

Let there be a gradual amelioration and a gradual relaxation of the monotonous conditions in the lives of long-time prisoners, and when they are released they will not present a spectacle like the man of whom I have been telling. For his eyes betrayed him, his high cheek-bones and hollow cheeks betrayed him, his hair on head and face betrayed him, his prison-made clothes betrayed him, but most of all his voice betrayed him. How he talked! There was no stopping; he ran on and on, and though I wanted to tell him much, I had to sit and listen to his queer voice as the words came tumbling over each other. I had never seen him or heard him before in this condition, and did not know what to make of him; but I sat and looked and listened wondering. At length I stopped him and told him he had better have a little breathing-time. 'Oh, for God's sake, let me talk! I have had no one to talk to all these years; let me hear my own voice!' On and on he went till a meal was served, and then my wife sat down with us. Gracious! it was worse than the talking. A knife and fork lay beside his plate, but he took the meat with his fingers. I called his attention to the knife and fork. He looked ashamed, and said: 'Excuse me; I had forgotten. I haven't seen any for three years.' But he cut a poor figure with them.

I kept him with me a few days, and let him practise his voice, got him shaved and decently clad. I obtained good lodgings for him with excellent people close by, and they very

soon learned to love and respect him. Again tools and materials for his work were provided, and I fitted up a room of my own for a workshop. His former patrons did not forget him, and work became plentiful, for many had been saving it up for him. He worked as if a fury were upon him. Every morning at eight, punctual as the clock, he rang my bell; every morning he left his lodgings with the kiss of little children on his lips; every evening he was welcomed home by them. Day by day I watched him. I saw his eyes become restful, his face became the face of a man, and 'his flesh the flesh of a child.' I heard his voice become human, I saw his face develop the power of smiling, and even heard organs that had long been silent and unused give forth a hearty laugh. He had to report himself regularly to the police, who treated him in a gentlemanly way, and never divulged his secret.

I am indeed exceedingly glad to have this opportunity of bearing witness to the considerate manner in which released prisoners are treated by the police. I have never met with any instance of persecution. A good deal has been said about them hunting up and betraying ticket-of-leave holders and discharged prisoners generally; my experience has been exactly to the contrary. I have known numberless instances of kind actions, and even of thoughtful care, displayed by detectives and others. Again and again have such officers brought old offenders to me, asking my help on their behalf. The police have a difficult task to perform; it is their duty to be suspicious, but I know that many of them are really glad to see an old offender go straight and proper.

He was a most ingenious man, and invented a new and pretty system of ornamenting the edges of books. He was justly proud of this, and took great delight in it. I saw him pursuing his experiments time after time, with all the ardour of an inventor. We were just taking steps to patent it, when he was again carried captive by his old enemy. With some pounds of his own honest earnings in his pocket, with a watch

and chain and plenty of good tailor-made clothes, with a thriving business that promised him independence, with a smile on his face and a 'Good-afternoon, Mr. Holmes,' he left my house and went to the suburbs, and broke into a mean little house, where it was impossible for him to secure portable goods to anything like the value of the money then in his own pocket. He was caught in the act, received a sentence of five years, and had his ticket-of-leave revoked. So again he writes to me from a convict prison, and pitiful his letters are. 'I don't know why I did it, but I was compelled to do it.' He begs me to write to him, and implores me not to cast him off, but to let him live on with one hope and with the knowledge that he has one friend in the world. I do write to him, but what can I say to cheer him? Were he at liberty, what could I do to help him? My poor wits are powerless and my resources useless before his inscrutable madness or his demoniacal possession. But I shall never see him again at liberty—nay, nay, for in less than nine years he will have eaten his own heart. I sit writing with the books he bound all around me. I take one in my hand, and I see proofs not only of skill but of honest workmanship, and of a conscientious man. And then, far away from the work he has left behind, I can fancy him, a man of many talents and infinite resource, at the daily round, the maddening round, of his monotonous task. I see him in the silence and long-continued solitude of his cell; I watch the disappearance of the man and the revival of the animal. But never again shall I see his deft fingers at work; never again shall I hear his brisk step at my door; for heart-disease has already hold of him, and small wonder. A year or two of maddening thought, incessant reflection and choking confinement, and he will have passed into the presence-chamber of the great Judge.

Many a castle in the air I built for him. I thought I had surrounded him with every safeguard, and my heart is still sad for him; but I regret not my efforts on his behalf, neither

do I count my labours lost, nor my time wasted, for I learned to know him, I learned to appreciate the awful power of his strange mania. Otherwise his life was gentle, and but for this curse he was a man. 'I ask you to believe me when I say that I was sincere in my promises to you. I told you that I considered myself in honour bound to do right, and to justify the confidence you have shown in me. I am no hypocrite, but why cannot I be as your sons? Why there should be a power within me impelling me to do these things I don't know; but I do know at times that I am utterly unable to resist it. Do you think there is any truth in fatalism? Is it my destiny? Is it any use my struggling against it?' These words form a portion of the last letter received from him, and he puts me questions that I cannot answer. I did not save him, but I tried my best.

Perhaps my methods were wrong, but to me they seem right; for I hold that if a man cannot be saved by faith and hope, by friendship and respect, there is no social salvation for him. There is a large class of criminals of this kind, not all possessed of the same mania, but impelled by the same power. Day by day men of brain and energy are released from our prisons. They have skill, but not muscle; intelligence, but not brute force. What will save them? Not wood-chopping ten hours a day in a 'labour home'; not envelope-addressing at half a crown per thousand! not paper-sorting under unpleasant conditions; not pick and shovel in competition with the navvy; not even clerical work, where, because of their past, they do two men's work for a boy's pay. These will not, cannot, redeem long-time men. If the consecration of loving hearts fails, if the dedication to their service of home, intelligence, family life, and a man's own self fails, if that divine inspiration that comes from human goodness fails, it is absurd to suppose that monotonous, ill-requited drudgery will succeed. Some kind people can, I believe, find a sort of gratification in making a profit or in getting cheap labour from men and

women who are down. Thank God this cannot be laid to my charge, no, nor to my wife's; for if the old 'unfortunate,' the hero of a hundred convictions, has lived with us and worked for us, we have paid her adequately. If the criminal who has spent a quarter of a century in prison has worked for us, we have paid him, and his labour has been as well requited as if his character was perfect and his past unsullied. Why should Christian people seek to get some advantage from unfortunate men and women who have fallen deeply into vice or sin? The return path to rectitude and citizenship is always a hard road to travel, and rightly so; but to make that road harder by imposing such heavy tolls upon the travellers is like unto casting out the devil by Beelzebub. I know a man at the present moment—a married man and a first-rate scholar, about thirty-five years of age—not long from prison who, because of his past and his helplessness, is earning ten shillings a week in a position to which he has been 'recommended.'

A large number of good people are tarred with this brush, for I have received scores of letters at different times from persons who required either servants or assistants of some sort, and who were willing to take, with a view to their reformation, some girl or woman who had gone wrong, or some man who was down, the condition being that I should recommend them. 'What are the duties? What is the payment? What references can you give?' I have always inquired of them. I invariably found that the duties were numerous and heavy, and the pay about half the current rate. The question of references was often taken as a gratuitous insult on my part; but I had good reasons for the question, and I could not think of sending any broken sinner who had some desire of amendment to any place or situation where that hope would soon be extinguished, or where their labour would altogether be inadequately rewarded. I have sent back to their homes, in various parts of England, women, healthy, strong, and useful, who have been sent up to London to be 'rescued,' and after

being 'rescued' have been sent out to drudgery at half a crown or three shillings per week, with certain deductions. Needless to say, they found their way into our police courts.

I do not want men and women bribed to be good, for goodness so obtained would be shoddy stuff. I do not want criminals and offenders to have an easier time or, indeed, as easy a path in life as the honest, sober, and industrious; nay, with all my soul, I protest against the lives of decent people being made harder and their difficulties increased by ill-considered efforts in rescue work. It avails little to set up Peter and knock Paul down, yet this must inevitably be the result if fallen men and women are to do vast quantities of useful work for little or no remuneration; but I do want fallen men and women to have some chance of reform, and I do pray that the return path to rectitude and decency may not be made too thorny.

How to right one wrong without creating another is then the problem, and it is almost insoluble—almost, but, I venture to think, not quite. We must, however, begin at the beginning. Our prisons should be the starting-place, and these must no longer be 'vengeance houses.' The law must be satisfied, I know; but surely the law ought to be satisfied with the protection of society and the punishment of the criminal, without also claiming as its due the demoralization of the prisoner. I say advisedly, after taking counsel with and making friends of many who have been only too familiar with prison, that the present methods conduce to that state of mind and body which renders discharged prisoners almost certain to commit crime. Crime, generally, is the result of some peculiar condition of the mind or, it may be, of the body of the perpetrator. I cannot differentiate, but men whose business it is to know should be able to do so. Certain actions follow, and we say that crime has been committed, and that the criminal is morally diseased; so we proceed to take vengeance upon him. It

would be considered insanity if physical or mental disease were so treated.

Prisons, then, should not only be the means of protecting society against the depredations of the criminals, but should also be hospitals or asylums for the study and cure of moral disease. Neither can I imagine a study and science more absorbing, for the wonders of the moral nature are greater even than the wonders of physiology. Have our prison officials studied in this direction ? If not, what qualifies them for the positions they hold ? Very respectfully, but very seriously, I would ask whether the army is the best training for the governor of a prison ? Are our prison doctors selected because of their researches in the domains of moral, mental, and physical disease ? Have our prison chaplains taken a degree in the university of human nature ? Are the warders possessed of some useful technical knowledge, as well as of a knowledge of men ? In mechanical trades a training has to be undergone before good workmanship is arrived at. In the professions long and severe courses of study are gone through, and examinations are held to test the fitness of the aspirants for certificates of knowledge or skill ; but to deal with human nature of the darkest and worst descriptions, it appears as though anyone will do. No special fitness is required, no training is looked for, and no knowledge of humanity is for ; in any other department of life the thing would asked be absurd.

If specialists are required anywhere, they are required in our prison officialdom. Not cranks or doctrinaires, not men who have made up their minds that they know all there is to be known about criminals and human nature, not fussy and 'goody-goody' people, and certainly not official martinets, should be in control of our prisons. Order and discipline there must, of course, be, but there is a discipline that kills as well as one that makes alive. There is small use in trying to discipline men by killing their better parts and destroying their

useful faculties. Great-hearted, wise-headed men, men of tact but men of sympathy, men who have above all things a knowledge of human nature, should have control of our prisoners. The medical profession must play a more important part, and the chaplains must be embodiments of a living Christ, and full of a Divine pity even for the very worst. 'The greater sinner a man is, the greater the need of his reform; the lower a man has fallen, the greater his need to rise; the more hopeless a man seems, the greater his claim for pity.' So writes a criminal to me, and on these grounds he implores me to help him when his sentence has expired. I think Christ would have said the same. 'I, whose vast pity almost makes me die,' Tennyson makes King Arthur say; and such a vast pity should permeate the heart—nay, the very bones and marrow of every prison chaplain. 'Power itself hath not half the might of gentleness' has been well said; and of all qualities of the human heart and mind, the power of sympathy is the mightiest, for it disarms resistance and overcomes evil with good. Once let our prisoners know that the officials are animated with a desire for their welfare, and all things will be possible; but they must feel it.

The best qualified officials will, however, be comparatively helpless without a proper system; true, they can make the best of a bad system, but with a good system their work would be powerful for good. They too, themselves, would profit, for it would interest them, and call into activity their better qualities, many of which must lie dormant under the present condition of affairs. We want a system that will help to humanize the prisoner, not to brutalize him. It will, I know, pass the wit of man to devise any plan by which the whole of our prisoners can be 'cured'; it is impossible to invent any system that will be suitable for every prisoner, for they are varied as nature itself. But it is practicable, and it would be wise, to have a system that, while punishing the prisoner, shall not by its punishments defeat the object it has in view. The

'terrors of the law' have little effect upon brutalized men, for they feel themselves at war with society, and, by the treatment meted out to them in prison, society has declared itself at war with them. Consequently they come out of prison more hardened than when they entered it, and a repetition of crime is most likely to result.

Briefly, then, I would suggest: Short sentences; abolition of ticket-of-leave; interesting work and more of it; less time alone, and more with the schoolmaster; gradual improvements in conditions as a reward for industry and good behaviour; some relaxation at intervals, such as lectures with magic lanterns, concerts, etc. The Home Secretary now allows lay officers of religious organizations to conduct missions in various prisons. I would go much further, for I would have lecturers who can speak well and interestingly upon various subjects invited to speak to the prisoners. I would have good singers and first-class musicians invited occasionally to give the prisoners a concert. I would have also the prisons supplied plentifully with books, and constant additions made to the library. I would have a looking-glass in every cell, that prisoners might at any time take knowledge of themselves. I would have every warder master of a trade, or able to teach something useful, for work that interests must be the great factor in the reformation of intelligent prisoners.

I may be asked, 'What kind of work would you suggest?' I reply at once, 'Any kind of interesting work for which a market can be found.' 'But you become a competitor in the labour market.' This cry, I know, would be raised, but it is a very stupid cry. See how the present system works. Numbers of men and women are detained in prison for long periods. During their detention they work at stale, uninteresting tasks, upon which there is no profit; consequently the community has to keep them. When released, numbers of them enter the 'Arks,' 'Elevators,' or 'Bridges' of the Salvation Army, or the labour homes of the Church Army, and proceed to work

for nothing, becoming indeed and truth very serious competitors in the labour market, as the wood-cutters and mat-makers will tell you.

I cannot conceive how it can be wrong for a man to earn his own living while in prison. Neither can I conceive the wisdom of allowing to great trading organizations rights and privileges which we would withhold from the State. But I can see the absurdity of keeping a man in prison for years, during those years giving him unremunerative work, and handing him over when released to some society, to continue working for nothing. The cheapness of his labour when at liberty is the danger, not the work he may do in prison. The absurdity is seen to be the greater when we remember that a large proportion of the male prisoners are married, and ought when released to set to work to keep, or, at any rate, try to keep, their families. During their detention society has in many instances been maintaining or assisting those families, and it certainly seems hard that society should have to continue doing so when the husbands are at liberty, but are working for large trading organizations. The place for the married man when discharged from prison is his home ; there his battle for social salvation will best be fought, and there it will have to be fought if fought at all. A half-year's, or even a whole year's sojourn in a shelter or labour home will not help him, for he has to come out and face the world, and by some means make a beginning. The recommendation of the shelter, or labour home, is by no means superior to the recommendation of prison —in fact, they are of equal value.

I look with something approaching dismay at the multiplication of these institutions throughout the length and breadth of our land. To the loafing vagrant class—a very large class, I know, but a class not worthy of much consideration—they are a boon. These men tramp from one to another, and a week or two in each suits them admirably, till the warm weather and light nights arrive, and then they are off. This

portion of the 'submerged' will always be submerged till some power takes hold of them and compels them to work out their own salvation. But there is such a procession of them that the labour homes, etc., get continual recruits, and the managers are enabled to contract for a great deal of work. In all our large towns there are numbers of self-respecting men —men who have committed no crime save the unpardonable sin of growing old. Time was when such men could get odd clerical work, envelope and circular addressing, and a variety of light but irregular employment, at which, by economy and the help of their wives, they made some sort of a living. But these men are now driven to the wall, for their poorly-paid and irregular employment is taken from them.* '*Too old to live!*' is the cry, and the labour home has no pity for such men; indeed, these places are as pitiless as commercial life itself, for no one over forty need apply.

Now, it needs no saying that the healthy single man under forty is of all men the best able to help himself; his wants should be small, and if he cannot supply them, then there is something wrong with him. No one can help such men till they know what that something is. The shelter, labour home, or elevator are of no possible use to the intelligent, industrious, and enterprising criminal. Yet these are the dangerous men; but, after all, they are the men of whom there is hope; for where there is industry and enterprise there is backbone, and

* TOO OLD TO LIVE!

'Aged forty-six, and out of work, a grocer's assistant named Thomas Harvey hanged himself at a house in Euston Road.

'On a piece of paper in the suicide's pocket was written:

'"I cannot get work, so have to die in a so-called Christian country. Young men only are employed, and the elders shoved aside when too old for the trade, to do what they can, no matter how meritorious their service to their employer may have been."

'At the inquest, yesterday, a verdict of "temporary insanity" was returned.'—*Daily Express*, July 5, 1900.

men with backbone can be saved—many of them, if not all; but they must not have the prison brand or the brand of any organization upon them.

Four years ago such a man came and claimed my help. I had seen him in the cells when he was committed for trial. I knew he would get a sentence of some years. He said: 'Will you help me when I come out?' I told him that if I was alive when his sentence expired he had better come and see me. I heard nothing of him while he served his three years, but one morning he was waiting for me and reminded me of our conversation. He evidently had some faith in me, so I returned the compliment and gave him a decent rig-out. I had no work to give him, but I supplied him with lodgings for a fortnight. He ultimately got work for himself, and passed from my knowledge till three weeks ago, when he called on me, exceedingly well dressed and evidently thriving. He had left his situation and was going to a superior one; he showed me a testimonial that his employer had given him, stating that for three years he had been a good and faithful servant.

A more remarkable case was that of a man who had undergone several terms for making counterfeit coin. He wrote to me from prison reminding me that I had spoken with him in the cells, telling me when his time would expire and asking for an appointment. I did not remember him, and had not much faith in his intentions, so I did not reply to him. But he came to see me, and I was rather impressed in his favour, so I took him up. I found he was a clever tinsmith, without wife or friends. I could not get him work, so I bought him tools and metal and hired a small place for him to work in. He went straight, and got on fairly, for he has now a little shop front in which he displays his wares. This happened four years ago, and I believe him to be living honestly. He has paid me for the tools, and though he lives miles away he sometimes looks me up.

I might tell of others, but I refrain. I tell of these because

I know, in spite of my brilliant failures, that many criminals can be saved; and I would not have it inferred, because I tell in this chapter of the failures, that success has not smiled upon me. It has; but it required effort and the application of common-sense to bring it about. There is no royal road to save them; for it is individually, not in the mass, that such can be redeemed, and any plan for rescuing them which does not give scope for individuality and does not allow for the temperament, characteristics, and abilities of these men is sure to be a failure in the long-run. The attempt to deter men from crime by squeezing all of them into the same mould while they are in prison is a dismal and disastrous failure; it deters them not. The attempt to redeem them when at liberty by pressing them into another mould in any institution is equally certain to result in failure. Destroy a man's individuality and you destroy the man.

With a wise prison system and properly qualified prison officials, societies for the aid of discharged prisoners would be unnecessary, for their occupation would be gone. Each prison ought to contain its own Prisoners' Aid Society, and what is to hinder the governor, chaplain, and doctor being at the head of it? But we want, first, a system that will be sufficiently elastic, and, secondly, officials who will seek to understand it before much good can be done in this direction. Given a system that seeks to humanize, that prepares prisoners for their liberty by a gradual improvement in their conditions, approximating more and more closely to a state of freedom as the day of release draws nigh, a system that shall not convert the eyes of men into the eyes of hunted animals, and that shall not make his heart a sealed book, a system that shall deliver men from senseless drudgery and damning monotony—then, and not till then, will prisoners, officials, and aid societies have a fair chance, for this must be the keynote of any reform:

Listen: 'I know how many nails there are in the floor

within reach of my eye, and the number of the seams also; I am familiar with the stained spots, the splintered furrows, the scratches, and the uneven surface of the planks. The floor is a well-known map to me—the map of monotony—and I con its queer geography all day and at night in dreary dreams. I know the splotches on the whitened wall as well as I know the warts and moles on the hopeless faces opposite me. My mind is a mill that grinds nothing. Give me work—work for heart and mind—or my heart will lose its last spark of hope, and my brain its last remnant of reason.' Can these words be beaten for lucidity and pathos? I think not. They are the reputed words of a prisoner, and have appeared in one of our London papers.

To-day in the cells at the police court sits a young man with the 'hunted eyes'; he has been brought from one of Her Majesty's prisons by two warders, where he was serving a term of imprisonment. He had been charged at this court, and committed for trial and sentenced, but now he is brought back and charged with a more serious offence. He is only twenty-eight, intelligent, and a clever workman. His young wife, soon to be a mother, is unaware of this second and more serious charge. I know him, and know that he has served seven years in a convict prison, where he made the acquaintance of my burgling bookbinder. So I ask him how he spends his time in prison, and what work has been given him during that portion of the present sentence he has served. 'Oakum-picking in my cell for the first month, and I sit and curse myself and everybody all the day long. I wonder I am not mad; perhaps I am,' was the reply I got from him, and I wonder too.

I ask for no maudlin sympathy for these men; I do not want them 'coddled' or patronized. I do not ask for the abolition of severe punishment in their case, but I do ask that their punishment shall be grounded on common-sense principles, and that humanity and science shall play some part in their treatment. I have visited but few prisons; from per-

sonal observation I know little of their inner working, but of men who have been released from prison I have a large experience, and for them I have some right to speak. I have made personal friends of them; I have worked and hoped, planned and schemed, for them. I have studied them, and I have suffered for them, and I know that the convict whose letter to the press I have quoted voices the cry of all intelligent criminals, and that they join with him in the plea, 'Give us work—work for hand and mind; work—intelligent work—or our hearts will lose all hope. Work—interesting work—or our brains will lose the last remnant of reason.'

With a humanized prison system many of these men might be lifted up, but alas! when they come into the hands of any society or individual who purposes helping them, not only has their crime and its consequences to be considered, but the work of the prison has to be undone before success can be achieved. To undo this in some cases is, I believe, an impossible task; the stain has become part and parcel of themselves, and though they may have good instincts, intentions, and desires, they cannot carry them out, for the dead hand of the prison is upon them, and to crime they go with automatic certainty. But I have given instances of criminals that possess a mania for one particular kind of crime only, and who rarely, if ever, commit any other. Such are by no means few in number, but how to deal with them is beyond my comprehension, for though it is possible to trace their crime to its cause, it is impossible for me to say how that cause can be removed. One thing, however, I do feel sure about, and it is this, that the present method of dealing with them while in prison intensifies the proclivity. Medical and scientific men ought to succeed where I fail; they can go deeper down into the wonders of the human body and mind. I can but pity such criminals, and in my blind way try to help here and there one of them. But to the Faculty I point out the undoubted fact that otherwise decent and estimable men and women have a

mania for a particular sort of crime, and that at intervals an almost irresistible impulse towards its commission comes upon them.

Probably this is not a new discovery; others beside myself must have noticed it. They may have noticed it, but very few can have had the same opportunities as myself of seeing the reality and force of this mania, and possibly no one has ever racked their brains or searched their mind as I have in the vain endeavour to find some method of saving these people from themselves, and of helping them in the strenuous but fruitless battle that many of them fight. To the Faculty I point it out, and to the Faculty I look for help. Shall I look in vain? Are we to be for ever impotent before diseases of the mind? I hope not, and I believe it will not always be so. The wondrous and varied organisms of the human body are now made visible to us, its diseases are traced and located, treated and often cured. But the abyss of the human mind is still unexplored, its diseases are still unclassified, and its peculiarities but little noticed.

Science and human sympathy in combination may do much for such criminals, but compassionate men, though full of religious zeal, can of themselves do nothing. I wish to be plainly understood; I do not undervalue the power of religious influence. God forbid! I do not depreciate the power of religious conviction. But the Almighty works by human means, and it is His will that men be saved by men. If these men are to be saved from their crimes, some means of dealing with the cause of those crimes must be found. Is this too much to hope for? Twelve years ago I was noting this peculiar kind of insanity, for such it appears to me. One man I then knew was undoubtedly a deeply religious man, yet he was constantly in trouble for a peculiar kind of trumpery theft. His remorse was intense, and at every failure his agony and repentance was sincere. One day he called on me, and he seemed very happy and confident. 'Thank God!' he said,

'it's all right now. I have got full salvation, and I am simply trusting.' He had joined another religious body, and was in constant attendance at prayer-meetings; but a month later he was in the cells again for a repetition of his old offence. He was no hypocrite, for it was not a matter of sin, but of disease in his case, and he is typical of many.

CHAPTER X

CRANKS

NUMBERS of people seem to be possessed of a strange kind of mania that only manifests itself in action when they have taken a little drink. It may be, and it frequently is, a very small drop of drink that does the mischief; but it leads to surprising results, for some weak spot, some peculiar trait, or some secret longing is operated upon at once. Poor old Cake-bread used to say: 'It is the argument that does it.' Inordinately fond of talking when free from alcohol, a very small dose of it made her tongue-power ten times greater, and she became 'argumentative,' and the police were required.

In vino veritas is often true, though more often the reverse holds good. Most people that are worth their salt have a hobby of some sort, and though 'cranks' are sneered at, yet the possession of a hobby is not to be despised, for it shows, at any rate, that the possessor is in earnest about some object, and is not the aimless, indifferent, and apathetic individual that lives like a vegetable, and goes through life without his pulses stirred, his heart warmed, or his brain-power excited. Don Quixotes are more estimable than cabbages, but they had best let drink alone, or they may share the fate of some I have seen and wish to tell of in this chapter.

Patriotism—and we are all patriots nowadays—is an excellent quality, but patriotism plus a dose of alcohol is not always a blessing, as a well-educated young stalwart found one morning to his cost. It was near the polling-day, and

the previous night he had been at a smoking concert, and truth compels to say in connection with a branch of the Primrose League. The smoking had been accompanied by drinking, and there were several speeches. The candidate for Parliamentary honours was present, and made a stirring speech on the protection of British industries. He waxed eloquent about the evils of foreign competition, and drew a dark picture of the future of the working-classes if the influx of foreigners was allowed to continue.

It was Saturday night, dark and wet; the shops were just about closing when the young patriot wended his way home. All at once he stopped, for something on the other side of the street attracted his attention; so he crossed over to a tailor and outfitter's establishment, in the doorway of which there stood ten little nigger boys, dummies, nicely dressed, to show the public the quality and cheapness of the goods. A shopman was just in the act of removing them for the night, when the patriot called out, 'Halt!' and the shopman halted.

'Why do you bring those foreign boys here? There are plenty of little English boys to do that job. Do you call yourself an Englishman?' The shopman said it was 'the governor's business,' and he could please himself whether he had English boys or nigger boys. This answer did not please, so, cursing the shopman, he rushed up to the dummies, smote each of them, and kicked them into the mud of the gutter, and rushed into the shop.

'Where's the governor?' he demanded, and the governor was pointed out. 'Look here. I have whopped all your niggers, and if you'll come outside, I'll punch your head for bringing them here to do English boys' work.' The governor went out and saw his broken figures and spoiled goods, and promptly sent for a policeman. Well pleased with himself, the patriot pursued his homeward way, followed by the governor. As some evil spirit would have it, he had not gone many yards before he came upon another clothing establishment and

some more dummies. He drew up in astonishment, rubbed his eyes, and called out, 'I thought I had settled you! I'll make sure of you this time.' At them he went. Into the gutter they went, where he was in the act of kicking them to pieces when a policeman arrived, and he was taken into custody. When he stood in the police-court dock, charged with being drunk and committing wilful damage, piled up in front of the witness-box were the broken figures, arms disjointed, heads severed from bodies, torn and muddy clothing, all beautifully commingled. Their evidence was overwhelming, and combined with the evidence of the shopman, given as above, made a conviction certain. When asked for his defence, he stated that he had been to a political smoking concert, and Mr. —— had been speaking about foreigners in England, so, having had a drink or two, he got confused; but he begged his worship not to convict him of drunkenness, for he absolutely denied having been drunk. The damage he admitted, and he was prepared to pay for it.

The magistrate, who loved a joke, and had a keen sense of the ridiculous, said, 'You are a second Don Quixote among the marionettes. I am sorry to have to fine you. Such heroic victories as yours deserve a better result, but you must pay five shillings for being drunk and two pounds for damage; and if I may be permitted a word of advice to a patriot like you, it is this: "Don't try to protect British industry after you have been at a smoking concert."' The man had plenty of money, and paid his fine, but went away very indignant at being fined for drunkenness. I don't think he ever troubled much about the British workman after that.

But some men repeat, time after time, experiences quite as absurd. I know a well-dressed gentleman, who paid at least £120 a year rent, who was charged four times in as many months for going in search of 'a black kitten with a blue ribbon round its neck.' Really, he was charged with annoyance, ringing the bell and kicking the front-door of some other

gentleman's house. The story was always the same—a little drink, and then he would go to a house, ring the bell, and, when the servant came, he would demand his kitten. In vain would the servant assure him that there was no kitten in their house. If the door was closed, he would continue ringing, and would ultimately proceed to kicking the door, and would refuse to budge till he had got his kitten. As the kitten was a purely imaginary one, a constable had to be fetched and the gentleman taken into custody. He was bound over in his own recognizances twice, and ultimately fined; but when I suggested that if he would put a bit of blue ribbon on his own coat it would prevent him seeing an imaginary kitten with an imaginary blue ribbon, he was most angry, and wanted to know if I accused him of being drunk. Possibly he has taken my advice, for I have not seen him since.

A very little drink will make some men who are naturally modest and diffident very assertive, and they become, mentally, very large indeed; in fact, for the time, it would appear that all knowledge and wisdom are centred in them; but it has a similar effect, physically, upon other men, whom I have found imagining themselves to be veritable sons of Anak. Such was little Ebbs. Nature had denied him much stature, for in his boots he only stood five feet three. I don't know whether he had an intense longing to be tall, or whether his ambition was to be a policeman; but this I do know, that no sooner had he partaken of a glass of beer than he became a six-foot policeman. The change in his stature and profession would not have mattered but for the fact that he insisted on doing policeman's duty, and this led to unpleasant results, and necessitated his frequent appearances before the magistrate. He was always a welcome visitor at the court, and it was an understood thing among the different magistrates that he was to be allowed to have his head when he stood in the dock.

His appearance was always enough to create laughter. The charge, always the same—being drunk, imagining himself a

policeman, and creating obstruction by directing the traffic in the streets—made the laughter more pronounced; but most amusing of all was the way in which he cross-examined the officer who arrested him, and the familiar assurance with which he addressed the magistrate. He had a round, clean-shaven face, wore glasses, his head was totally devoid of hair, and looked like a bladder of lard; his face was just visible over the dock railing. He had been a hard-working man, and could earn good wages. His wife—well for him—was a most careful woman; as they had no children, she had saved money, and they owned a row of cottages in the suburbs. Besides the ambition of becoming a big policeman, he was in possession of another, or, rather, another was in possession of him. He loved flowers generally, but dahlias were his especial pride, and he would spare no trouble in his desire to have the best and choicest that could be obtained. His love for flowers never got him into trouble—in fact, he remembered flowers no more when he had taken a glass; but then his other ambition became rampant. He was a bit of a humorist, and quite a logician, as the various magistrates found.

He had been charged several times before I made his acquaintance. The particular morning when I first saw him, a big policeman, quite young and fresh from the country, had found him in the street, putting up his hand and stopping the traffic in a very busy thoroughfare. A collision ensued, and the traffic got into a complete tangle. As the little man refused to leave his post of duty, the officer took him into custody, and he was charged. The officer, fresh to giving evidence in a London court, was nervous and confused, and spoke in a very low tone of voice. Ebbs watched him closely for a time, and then called out to the officer: 'Speak out and speak plainly. Don't be afraid of me. I want to hear the evidence.' 'Do speak up, officer,' said the magistrate; 'I want to hear myself.' This made the officer more nervous still. He made a sorry mess of his evidence, but there was no doubt as to the main

facts. 'What have you to say to it?' asked Mr. G. Chance, who was then sitting. 'Well, your worship, you have heard the evasive way in which the officer has given his evidence. He is but an unsophisticated countryman. What can he know? Your experience and judgment, I am sure, will not allow you to take his word in preference to mine.' 'I think it will,' said his worship. 'You see, you were here last week on a similar charge, and I fined you ten shillings. To-day I must fine you twenty.' He was taken to the cells, but his wife came and paid the money, taking him home with her.

The following week he was in the dock again on a similar charge, and similar evidence was given. Mr. Biron was sitting, and asked him for his defence, which Ebbs commenced by asking: 'Would half a pint of four-ale make your worship drunk?' 'I don't think so,' said his worship. 'No, nor I don't think so either.' He said this in such a knowing way as to intimate that it would take a good many half-pints to do it. Even the magistrate laughed, but, trying to look severe, he said: 'I don't see that that has anything to do with the matter.' 'Oh yes, your worship, it has, for I will show you, and it is this way. I came out yesterday morning with twopence in my pocket; my old woman won't let me have more.' 'Quite right, too,' interposed the magistrate. 'Well, I have got twopence. I come out; I meet with an old friend. Now, what is my duty as an Englishman?' 'Oh, I can't say,' said his worship. 'Yes, you can, Mr. Biron—yes, you can. You know, for you are an Englishman: half a pint for him and half a pint for me. Now, I assure you honestly that I had no more, and if half a pint of four-ale won't make you drunk, why should it make me drunk? See? And if you are not to be punished for drinking several half-pints, how can it be right or just for you to punish me for drinking one?' 'Well, I think I can answer that,' said Mr. Biron, 'by admitting that the law gives me no power or right to punish you for drinking half a pint, but it does give me the power and the right to

punish you for the effects of that half-pint, and it is my duty to do so. You must pay twenty shillings, and, mind, if you come here again on a similar charge, I'll make it forty.' Again his wife took him out of pawn and saw him home.

The next week he was there again; same kind of charge and evidence. But this time Ebbs stood in the dock looking solemn and serious. 'Now, Ebbs, what have you to say?' Looking quite pathetic, he said: 'I am very, very sorry, your worship, but I have been a fool this time.' 'Hold!' said his worship; 'don't say any more, or you will spoil it. You have made the best speech you ever made in this court. I am glad you are coming to your senses. I meant to fine you forty shillings, but now you are realizing your folly, I shall only fine you five.' As the gaoler took him out of the court he put his hand to the side of his mouth, and called out, loud enough for all in court to hear: 'Didn't I draw the feather over Mr. Biron's eyes nicely!' And everybody laughed, Mr. Biron included.

It took a collision to cure him of his noble ambition, and the last time I saw him in court he was fined heavily, and afterwards the police court knew him no more. But I saw him several times, and he told me that he was no longer going to be a fool for half a pint of four-ale.

Occasionally the drink, acting on some pet belief, brings the individual into more serious trouble, and ruins his character and prospects for life. An intelligent artisan that I knew something of, and upon whose honesty there did not rest a shadow of doubt, got a reputation as a burglar, and twelve months' imprisonment beside, owing to the combination of drink and decided Socialistic views. He was a tall man with a very long nose. I have heard that men with big noses have a great deal of character. I can't say if it is true generally, but, anyhow, this man had plenty of both. I had seen him at the court several times when some question about working men's clubs had to be settled. Any question of this sort, or of the

freedom of speech, or Socialism, was sure to bring him, and he was an attentive listener.

One day, to my surprise, he stood in the dock on a serious charge of burglary. A policeman stood on each side of him holding him up, for he was half asleep, and half insensible from drink. He was remanded for a week, that he might have time to get sober and to waken up. When he came up on the remand, I had a long conversation with him, and from what he told me and from what I gathered from the prosecutor, I offer the following as a fair account of what took place.

The prosecutor, who lived in a good neighbourhood, went to bed about 1 a.m. As he was last up, he closed and bolted the doors, and fastened the windows. He was of the opinion that he did not bolt one of the doors, but he knew it was closed, and it could only be opened from the outside with a latch-key that fitted it. The prisoner had been at his club all day on Sunday and Monday, and had been drinking heavily. He started homeward about half-past one on Tuesday morning. He had some recollection of opening a house-door with his latch-key ; he knew it was not his own, but he felt somehow that he had a perfect right to go in, so he went in and lit the gas. He did not remember anything more till he found himself in Holloway. It was a singular thing that his latch-key should fit the prosecutor's door, but it was more singular that he, in his muddled condition, should walk up to that one particular house, and that the door of that house should not be bolted ; but so it was. He entered, and lit the gas in the hall. A nice gray overcoat was hanging in the hall ; he put it on. A silk hat was with it ; he threw away his cap and put on the hat. A silk hat demands a silk umbrella, so he appropriated one. He went into the dining-room and lit the gas—all four lights on the chandelier. On the mantelpiece lay a silver cigar-case ; that, after he had lit a cigar, went into the overcoat pocket, and other valuables went in to keep it company. He then proceeded to explore the house, and found the larder ;

again he lit the gas, and discovered cold meat, pickles, etc. These he brought into the dining-room and invited himself to supper. On the principle that 'good eating deserveth good drinking,' he helped himself to a half-gallon can full of beer from a barrel which he found in the larder, left the tap running and the gas burning, and, having thought for the future, he filled the coat-pockets from a dish of uncooked sausages. Then he returned to the dining-room, where he drew a couch close to the table, and proceeded to smoke and drink till blissful sleep came upon him.

At seven the next morning, when the servant came down, she was surprised to find the gas burning, the passage flooded with beer, and the front-door ajar. When she went into the dining-room her surprise was turned into terror, for strange guttural sounds proceeded from the couch. She recognised the master's overcoat, but she was quite sure that the long red nose that pointed to the ceiling did not belong to the master, so she screamed and fainted. When the master came down he tried to awaken and question the man, but it was of no use He therefore went for the police, who also tried to awaken him. Neither could they succeed, so they fetched an ambulance, upon which he was lifted bodily—silk hat, overcoat, sausages, umbrella, and all—and taken to the police station. He was charged and taken up to the court, where he still had the coat on and the et ceteras in the pockets when he stood in the dock.

It was not till he returned from Holloway to stand again before the magistrate that he knew what he was charged with. He was sent for trial, and received a sentence of twelve months' imprisonment. But from my conversations with him I believe that he had not the slightest idea that he was doing any wrong, and I believe he was as innocent of any criminal intentions as anyone could be.

If a man has a love for classical poetry, drink will also set him going regardless of time or place. I once saw a tramp about thirty-five years of age standing in the dock charged

with being drunk and disorderly in the small hours of the morning; although clothed almost in rags, he had a clean-shaven and refined face. The officer who had him in custody said that he heard the prisoner using very bad language—'unseen language'—that he went to him and told him to go home, but that he refused and kept on shouting and swearing, stamping his feet and waving his hand; it being a quiet street and everyone in bed, he took him into custody.

The prisoner asked permission to cross-examine the officer before he stated his own case. 'Officer, do you say I was using bad language?' he asked. 'Very bad; the worst I ever heard,' was the reply. 'Will you give me your definition of good language?' The officer could not. 'Do you still say that I was using obscene words?' 'Very bad words,' said the officer. 'Do you still say that I was swearing?' 'I do.' 'Well, then, I pity your ignorance,' he said, and the officer stood down. Turning to the magistrate, he said, 'Your worship, I want to deny this charge most emphatically, and I want to explain how this charge was made, and what led up to it. All my life I have been fond of holding communion with the greatest minds of all ages, and I have committed to memory the greater parts of Homer and Dante, Shakespeare and Milton, as well as many other poets. If your worship will quote me a line from any of them, I will take it up and continue.' 'Oh no, no!' said his worship; 'I will take it for granted.' 'Well, your worship, when I have been walking about the country it has been my delight, when I have been alone, to recite aloud choice portions from the poets, and last night as I was going to my lodgings I saw the moon at full. I stopped and looked at it, and I thought it was the sun. I thought of Satan's address to that luminary; to think of it was, with me, to recite it, so I began, "O thou that with surpassing glory crowned!" when Shakespeare comes in with Hamlet's soliloquy. I did not want to recite from Shakespeare, so began again, "O thou——" At the end of the first

line in comes Homer, so I began again with Milton: then in comes Dante. I suppose I had recited the one line from Milton twenty times, and each time was interrupted by one of the others; perhaps I did get a little loud and emphatic, but bad language I could not be guilty of, and as to obscene language, my very gorge rises at it. The ignorance of the officer prevents him understanding good language; I am quite sure your worship understands how the mistake arose.' 'Yes, I do,' said his worship: 'you had been mixing your drinks.' 'I had a glass of gin, a bitter-and-mild, and a Scotch whisky,' said the tramp. 'Ah! I thought so, and I must fine you three shillings for mixing your drinks, for that was the reason your poets got mixed; and look, when you want to "hold communion with the greatest minds of all ages," you stick to *aqua pura*, and your poets will run straight.' 'Oh, don't fine me! your worship, don't fine me! I have a wife and three children outside.' He was taken to the cells, where, in conversation, he told me that he was a public-school boy. Outside I saw a poor, weary-faced, bedraggled woman and three young children who tramped the country with him and whose home in London was the cheap lodging-house.

I met another classical scholar under very pitiful circumstances. He, too, had been picked up in the street by a policeman whilst holding communion with great minds. He gave no name and no address, and no one knew anything about him. When I saw him first he was crouching in a corner of the prisoners' room among a lot of coarse men and vicious women. He was a splendid-looking fellow and well-dressed. When I spoke to him, he said: 'Water.' I got some for him, and he emptied the can. He then stood up, and raising his hands and eyes, as if in invocation, he said: 'O heavenly Muse, inspire me now!' And the inspiration came. For two hours he perambulated that room, and an unbroken stream of words flowed from him. Such language and such utterance I had never listened to, beautiful thoughts in beautiful language; now

tender and soft, now declamatory and full of passion. Action and utterance were perfect, as on and on he went. The vicious women and coarse men looked at him in wonder; the police looked on, and did not know what to make of him; I stood and listened and looked as on and on he went, now in English, now in languages that I did not understand, and anon dropping into Scotch; the action of his hands and the play of his features were perfect. I could almost understand his unknown tongues. He was taken before the magistrate, and in the dock the stream of words flowed on; he was oblivious of everything and everybody but his poets. He was taken by the policeman to the workhouse, and the stream rolled on. After a few days I went up to the workhouse to see him, but he had taken his discharge, and was gone. One couplet I remember he uttered, and it describes him to me—

> 'Like a snowflake on a river,
> Seen a moment, gone for ever'—

for I have never seen him since, and I never learned who he was or whence he came.

One University-trained gentleman I saw too much of, for he stuck to me with a pertinacity that was more than troublesome—it was a nuisance. Just at that particular time Jane Cakebread was at large, and was paying us far too many visits. It was no uncommon thing to see Jane approaching the house from one end of the street and my University friend from the other; no uncommon thing, either, for my courage to evaporate and for me to take myself off by the back way and leave my wife to tell them I had gone to the court. Thither Jane would come, but not my other friend. 'I will come in and wait,' he would invariably say; and if once in, wait he would the whole day, and at midnight would show no disposition to go. 'I am going to live with you,' he said on one occasion, and argument had no effect on him. It took the united strength of myself and two sons to convince him that he was mistaken, for late at night we had to carry him gently out.

Outside he gave us operatic selections on his piccolo. He had been a Foundation scholar of Dublin University, and had also taken a musical scholarship. He was about forty-five when one of our magistrates kindly introduced him to me. I invited him to see me, and he made himself comfortable at once. He was at the pianoforte in a very few minutes without any invitation, and kept on playing and singing for a long time. He was homeless and penniless ; his wife had left him ; his friends had cast him off. 'I will be musical instructor to your family,' he said. It was no use my telling him that I could not afford to pay for a person of his distinguished ability. 'We will waive the question of payment,' he said ; 'the home and congenial company are what I require.' I took him out, presumably for a walk, but I left him at some lodgings near by, for which I promised to pay. He was at my house the next morning by nine o'clock, and he had a good-sized package with him, wrapped in oilcloth. 'I want to show you this,' he said ; so in he came, bringing his lumber with him. 'What have you got ?' I asked him. 'Wait a bit before I uncover it,' he said. 'I want to explain.'

He explained for about half an hour, and the sum of it was that the present methods of teaching music were wrong, absolutely wrong, and that he had discovered a true way. The sol-fa system had a germ of truth in it, inasmuch as it was based on 'mental effect' ; but his way was to teach music by colour. Down to the piano he went and struck a note. 'How many vibrations make up that note ?' I could not tell him. He told me. He uncovered his package. It was the keyboard of a pianoforte, or, rather, an imitation of one, but painted in all the colours imaginable—blue and green, yellow and red, and all their shades following one after the other. Touching a brilliant C, he asked : 'How many vibrations of light does it take to make up that colour ?' I could not tell him. Again he enlightened me : 'The same number that it took to make up the C that I struck on the instrument. Now I'll proceed

to verify it with my piccolo.' He blew a shrill note. 'How many——' I stopped him, telling him that I was not a scientific man, and was quite of the same opinion as himself. I got him out by promising him a breakfast, and left him and his key-board at a neighbouring coffee-shop. I gave him money for his breakfast, but I heard afterwards that he played his piccolo for them by way of payment, and wanted his dinner on the same terms; but they ejected him. I paid his lodgings for a month.

He and old Jane paid us many visits. If I had been a clever man, I should have gone on tour with the pair. I am sure there was money in them; such a pair were well worth knowing.

At length I told him he must look out for himself, and that I should not pay for his lodgings any longer. I missed him for some days, and flattered myself that he was gone, so I went to his lodgings to make sure. As I stood in the passage the shrill tones of the piccolo and the strains of the 'Bohemian Girl' came downstairs to greet me. The landlady besought me to take him away. 'He'll be the death of me. He has not left his bed for five days, and has been blowing that thing all the time,' she said. I went up to him. There he lay, happy as a king. A bed to lie upon, a piccolo to play, some tea-leaves to smoke, he was all right; nothing put him out—nothing but physical force ever did. He put his instrument down and filled and lit his pipe when I entered. I wanted him to get up and dress, offering him a dinner if he would do so. 'And find the door closed against me when I come back? No thanks!' he said. I had taken the room, and was morally bound to get the fellow out. I could not dress him against his will, I could not put him in the street, so I told him that I should come round at five o'clock with the relieving-officer and a conveyance to take him to the workhouse. He got up, dressed, put his piccolo in his pocket and his keyboard under his arm, and went. He did not wait for a dinner, but I noticed that he put the dried tea-leaves in his pockets. Some weeks afterwards he was at

my door again. It was the morning of the day on which our only daughter was buried. I went to speak to him, and, telling him of our sorrow, I gave him half a crown, and told him to go quietly away. He did so, but returned, bringing some choice flowers, a pretty card, and some ' In Memoriam ' verses written by himself. He had spent the half-crown, and was again penniless. I saw him bareheaded in the cemetery, and I saw him and my burglar friend approach the grave after we had left it ; but he came to the house no more. Twelve months afterwards I again had a sight of him. From the top of an omnibus I saw him walking along the Strand with the keyboard under his arm.

Unappreciated genius is a very common thing, but if in despair the possessor seeks comfort from drink, then tragedy more often than comedy ensues. A man about fifty-five years of age was picked up on London Fields with his throat cut, a razor in his hand, and his breath smelling strongly of spirits. The police considered it a case of attempted suicide, for he was not dead. After detention at the hospital, he was charged, so I made his acquaintance. After the law had done with him, I made friends with him, hoping to help and cheer him a bit, for he was quite friendless—his wife dead and no children. I found him a most intelligent and clever man. He had been a commercial traveller in a good way of business. He owned frankly to me that when a traveller he drank heavily, but strenuously denied that drink was the cause of his present position, though he admitted that, when under the influence of drink, years ago, he had been attacked and robbed of a large sum of money, and received at the time severe injuries to his head. He was of a mechanical turn of mind, and for more than thirty years he had been working at a problem that approached perpetual motion, which, he said, was absurd. He lived in a very poor neighbourhood, and had a small room in a miserable house. In his room were a very small truckle-bed, one chair and table, and a little lathe. The rest of the room was covered with models of his machinery, some finished,

some in course of construction, while the walls were covered with drawings and designs. After the death of his wife, he determined to give up his calling, and go in for mechanics altogether, and this was the result—disappointment, poverty, starvation, and would-be suicide.

I gave him a suit of clothes, of which he stood in sore need, sent him for a short holiday to recruit his health, and then induced him to do some travelling on commission in the timber trade. This he did for a short time, but his heart and his thoughts were ever on his models. I have sat by him in his little room, and have seen him glow with excitement and become as one inspired as he expatiated on his invention, which, he contended, would, if properly utilized, dispense with steam and electricity as motive powers, do away with horses in trams and cabs, work the sewing-machine for the tired woman and the knife-cleaning machine for the hotel porter, while cyclists might adopt it to carry them over hill and dale; the possibilities were infinite.

Years of failure and suffering had only made him the more certain of success. His plan was novel and interesting, and if he could not get much force out of it, he certainly could get motion. His room was full of wheels, all of different sizes, but built on much the same lines. The spokes of the wheels were of a peculiar serpentine pattern, and each spoke formed a trough. In each trough was placed an iron or brass ball, which was correctly turned and polished. He had made his wheels with a flat, broad rim, and they would, when placed on the floor, stand upright of themselves. The hubs were peculiar. I cannot explain them, but sure enough, when he just touched a wheel, it ran gently across the room. The balls formed his motive power, and the arms and hub were his secret. As the wheel moved, I noticed that three balls were always on the down-side and at the outside edge of the wheel; two balls were on the upside of the wheel, but as soon as they began to ascend they ran at once to the centre of the wheel,

the hub, a peculiar arrangement of the spoke-troughs, compelling them to do this. Thus, with three balls on the outside down grade and two balls on the up grade, but close to the hub, he undoubtedly got some little power. His argument was, that if only the wheels were large enough, and the balls heavy enough, any amount of power and speed could be obtained. He begged me to go into partnership with him, so that we jointly could patent it. As my faith and finances were not equal to this, he gave up his work, and declared the glory and profit should be all his own. I am afraid they will, for the last time I saw him he was starving in his little room. To give him money, I found, was useless, for he spent it either on his models or in drink.

My lack of faith has, I am afraid, been a great financial loss to my family, for before 'Sherlock Holmes' died a lady in Kensington wrote to me repeatedly, thinking evidently that I had some connection with that astute detective. She had lost, or had been robbed of, one hundred thousand pounds' worth of diamonds and jewellery, and had come to the conclusion that I was the man to recover it. She had not much of a clue, but in sixteen pages, closely-written, she gave me a detailed and elaborate description of her jewels, and finished by offering me ten per cent. of the value I recovered. It was a tempting offer, but I kept a discreet silence, knowing I should get better terms. After a time she wrote again, offering twenty per cent. I waited on, and about that time the death of the famous detective was announced, and I have since had no chance of earning that £20,000.

But the world loses more than I do, for the wonderful and beneficent discoveries and inventions that go unapplied can only be appreciated by those who, like myself, mix much with humanity, or by the doctors at lunatic asylums. There need no longer be 'confusion of tongues.' A gentleman I met in the cells—a cultured, educated gentleman, too—has devoted years of study, and sacrificed everything, to perfect a plan by

which everybody can understand everybody in every clime and nation ; it is as simple as A B C, and it only needs adopting. Many years he has been trying to induce his countrymen to adopt it, but he has no honour in his own country. So he is trying princes and potentates abroad, to whom he writes long letters, offering his simple plan. Somehow they fail to see the advantage of it, and, of course, he starves. He was as gaunt as a famished wolf when I first met him, and his sufferings brought him into the police court. I thought some food and a rest at the seaside would benefit his health, and they did. But renewed health brought increased faith in his discovery, for which he is prepared to die, and no doubt will die, for he is again becoming gaunt and weird-looking, and, I am afraid, seeks consolation from the bottle. The friends of such men shun them as if they had the plague ; for the wealth of Crœsus and the wisdom of Solomon cannot save a man who to his devotion to some cherished delusion adds a devotion to drink ; and though one feels an infinite pity for, and a great interest in, such men, yet, if one essays to help them, it is soon apparent that the task is hopeless, and the advice of the seer of old is followed : ' Ephraim is joined to his idols ; let him alone.'

Yet this class of men is very numerous. I have a number of them on my list of friends. One by one, from different walks of life, they have gathered round me, and they have infinitely more faith in me than I have in myself, for they look to me to see them righted, and I know the impossibilities which they cannot realize. A powerful and clever man of this description comes very often to learn how I am getting on with his affairs. He believes himself the true heir to the throne of England, and I have to take his word for it, for of argument he will have none ; it is too real with him. By a process of inductive reasoning he has come to the conclusion that I am the one to get him crowned. He reasons thus : He is the King. The Archbishop of Canterbury crowns the King. The Archbishop belongs to the Church of England. I belong to the Church of England. I

know him to be the true King. Therefore it is my duty to see that the Archbishop does his duty and crowns him.

He can converse rationally and with point on any other subject. He can see the failings and follies of others, but his devotion to this idea has ruined him, and he has become a penniless wanderer. He too seeks spirituous consolation, and gets into the hands of the police at varying intervals, when he defends himself with the skill of an accomplished lawyer, but also makes use of his opportunity to declare to the magistrate his kingship. Sometimes the magistrate has doubts of his sanity, and remands him to prison for a medical report. He wrote me from Holloway once, telling me that he was on a week's remand and on such a day would be again at Westminster police court. He expected me to be there and give evidence on his behalf. 'The magistrate thinks I am mad, and the prison doctor has orders to report on me,' he wrote. 'You can testify to my sanity as well as to other important matters, but as you have not seen me lately, I must now give you proof of my sanity. I prove it thus: Mad people think themselves sane. All the world beside may be mad, but they never doubt in the least their own sanity, but I find myself entertaining doubts as to my sanity. I sometimes say to myself, "Are you going mad?" Ergo, the very fact that I question my own sanity proves that sanity beyond doubt.' I did not go to give the evidence asked for; he established his sanity without my aid, and he came to see me. Fortunately, he bears the deprivation of his rights with philosophic patience and imperturbable good-humour. He knows 'it is only for a time!' It is no use to say with regard to these men, 'Get them to give up the drink,' for they cannot, neither is drink the cause of their condition. Drink is the effect, not the cause, a symptom of something wrong, not the wrong itself. I confess my inability to get down to the bed-rock of their condition.

CHAPTER XI

THE ARCADIANS AND SOME ACCOUNT OF THE 'GUBBINS'

THAT primitive life and manners simple, if not innocent, continue even now amongst us was brought startlingly to light in North London. A man, presumably young, stood in the dock, charged with stealing nine shillings and sixpence. A strange-looking fellow he was, with his upright hair uncut and uncombed for many a day. Unwashed in body, and tattered in clothing, he looked the image of fantastic fear. The prosecutor, not quite so fearsome-looking, was also a strange specimen of humanity, for he was a midget; his head was scarcely higher than the desk of the witness-box, and had it not been for his face and clothing, he might have passed for a child. His evidence did not amount to much. He knew that he lay down in his tent at twelve o'clock on Saturday night, with the money in his pocket, and when his sister woke him up at four, his money was gone. Following him came the sister, still less in stature, and still more strange in appearance. In her arms she held something wrapped in an old shawl. No sound proceeded from this shawl, but from the way in which she held it and the maternal manner in which she swayed herself as she gave evidence, it was plain there was something in it alive.

She might have been nine years of age; she said she was nineteen. She saw the prisoner at two o'clock on Sunday morning crawl into her brother's tent, feel in his pockets, take the money and go away. 'Where were you?' asked the magistrate. 'Sitting outside, sir.' 'What were you doing?'

'Keeping company with my young man, sir.' 'Why did you not stop him?' 'Please, sir, my young man had gone to sleep, and I did not want to disturb him.' This being all the evidence, and no money being found on the prisoner, he was discharged. Outside the court I found the little people crying bitterly, for every penny they possessed had gone. They were wood-choppers: buying old boards, splitting them up, and hawking the firewood at a penny a basket, for which purpose they hired a hand-barrow at a shilling per week. A financial catastrophe had overtaken them; they had no money for stock, food, or barrow, so they were in despair.

'Let me see what you have got in that shawl,' I said, and opened it. A shock followed, for the tiniest bit of mortality I ever saw was revealed—not only small, but so strange in colour and appearance, that had I been told it was a little monkey I could not have disputed it. I gave them a few shillings for food, etc., and, asking where their tent was, told them to be 'at home' in the afternoon, for I was coming to see them. I went, and stumbled into Arcadia.

Imagine, if you please, about three-quarters of an acre of waste land, bounded on one side by an unsavoury canal, on another by chemical works, which were closed in by a high wooden fence, at the back by the streets of Hackney Wick, whilst on another side a huge workhouse frowned. Here and there upon the ground were heaps of ashes and general rubbish: Decaying vegetable matter, a dead dog far gone in decomposition, and two cats in a similar condition, all contributed their sweetness to the desert air. A couple of melancholy-looking horses of extreme age were trying to eat a handful of hay, which the condition of their poor old teeth prevented. Here was salubrious Arcadia and its inhabitants, of whom I counted eighty-seven.

There were twelve tents and six caravans to house the Arcadians. The caravans need no description, for they were of the ordinary gipsy kind, but the nature of the tents needs

some explanation. Four of these were of the usual kind, made out of old sheeting, shaped like half an orange, and standing about four feet in height. The other tents were ranged along by the wooden fence. A description of one will stand for them all: Four feet from the fence a low wall three feet high had been built of stones, bricks, or clods loosely piled together; some old boards had been placed on the little wall, and allowed to fall against the fence, to which they were secured by nails. One end of the tent was made of old sacks, etc., which were secured at the top and loose at the bottom, allowing for ingress and egress. The other end was formed of pieces of wood, scraps of rusty sheet-iron, etc.; there was no attempt, so far as I could see, to make any of them impervious to wind or wet. It was April when I visited them, but all these people had lived under these conditions since the beginning of the previous November. It was dinner-time, for I saw family parties, and there was a strong scent of fried bacon in the air.

I was just about to inquire which was Brown's tent, when I saw coming towards me a little woman very like the one I had seen at the court, but a trifle bigger. She carried a babe in each arm, and I saw at a glance that one of them was the little thing I had seen at the court, minus the shawl. 'Are you the gentleman that spoke to my sister this morning?' 'Yes,' I said. 'I was just looking for your tent. Which is it?' She pointed it out, the one I have described. 'Good gracious! you don't mean to say that you live there! How many are there of you?' 'Three of us and the children.' 'Have you a husband?' 'No, sir.' 'Has your sister?' 'No.' 'How many children have you?' 'Two, and my sister one.' 'Any of them born here in this tent?' 'No, sir; we go into the "house" to have them.' 'Where do you come from?' 'Red Lion Street, Holborn.' 'Are your parents alive?' 'No, sir; both dead.' 'What was your father?' 'A colour-grinder. We lived in a house when he was alive.' 'How old are you?' 'Twenty-five; my brother

is twenty-two and my sister nineteen.' 'How do you all manage to sleep in there?' 'We have to take it in turns, sir.' Here we were joined by the younger sister, who took charge of her own babe. 'What are you going to do with it?' I asked. 'I don't know, sir.' 'I will tell you, then: carry it about till it dies; then there will be an inquest, and you will be in trouble. What are you going to do with your two?' I asked the elder. She had not the slightest idea. I tried hard to persuade them both to go into the workhouse. The younger ultimately consented, but the elder would have none of it, and went rather sulkily to her tent, as I declined to give them any further assistance. I asked the younger for the tent of the fellow who had robbed her brother, and she said: 'He has not got a tent; he lives in the dust-shoot over there.' I promised myself a visit to the dust-shoot.

After telling her that if she would go into the 'house,' and let her little one die decently, I would help her to a better life, I went to explore the other 'tents.' Three young women were at the door of one, and they were not disposed to be communicative, for they wanted to know who I was, what I was inquiring about, and what business it was of mine; so I tried my luck at another. Husband and wife here—at least, so they told me; but they had no children. They came from Holloway, had been here three months, and meant to stop till the Vestry moved them, which they thought would not be long first. They lived by making letter-racks and flower-pots of scallop-shells, and then hawking them. This was the first time they had lived in this manner, but what were they to do when their home had gone? No, they would not go into the workhouse for me or anyone else; and when they got moved off they supposed they would have to find another place.

I espied a dinner-party; father, mother, and seven children were seated on the ground busy with their mid-day meal of bacon and potatoes. An old bucket, with some holes knocked in the sides and the bottom well perforated, was their cooking-

stove ; an iron pot and a rusty frying-pan their only utensils. A piece of bacon in one hand and a potato in the other, they all seemed to be enjoying themselves. The man I found to be an old acquaintance, for he had been charged with cruelty to a donkey. The donkey, I believe, died, though I did not see it ; but I have the word of the police and that of a respected veterinary for the fact that the donkey did die.

'Hello, Gamble !' I said. 'You seem to be having a good time of it. All these children yours ?' 'Yes, all born in that caravan.' 'But you don't all sleep in it ?' 'Oh no ; only missus and myself and one or two of 'em.' 'Where do the others sleep ?' 'Oh, we take the shafts off the van, and put these sheets all round, and they sleep under it ; it is better than a tent.' 'How do you get on for clean water ?' I asked, for I knew that the East London Water Company had served notices upon the people living in the neighbourhood against supplying the Arcadians with water. Gamble looked a bit shy, and said : 'Oh, we manage it ;' but he was not disposed to tell me how.

At another caravan I found three generations—a very old couple, husband and wife evidently ; a younger man, with his wife and four children ; these children also slept under the van in which they were born. The old couple had a gipsy tent, and the younger couple the van, the outside of which was covered with their merchandise. Not a single child at either van could read or write ; none of them had ever been to school. I went on to the gipsy tents.

At the door of one a middle-aged woman sat on an empty packing-case tying up bundles of grass, which had been previously dyed a startling colour. She had no children, and said her husband had died a year ago. They had lived in that tent together, and had two children ; but both of them died. 'I suppose you will be married again soon ?' I said, looking at her. She said she thought not, for she did not have a very good time with the first.

I thought it time to go, so I took a walk to the 'dust-shoot.' Year after year the ashes and refuse from the dust-bins of Hackney had been shot here—mountains of it. Here were boys and girls with sacks picking up bits of coal, cinders, or coke to take home, and young fellows collecting all the meat tins, salmon and lobster tins, etc. I watched the latter for a time, and saw they were placing the tins on coke fires, which were burning in several places. At one of these fires I saw the fellow with the upright hair, the man I was in search of, so I drew near and watched him awhile. He recognised me, but did not say anything. I soon saw why the tins were collected and put on the fire, for as soon as they became thoroughly red-hot he lifted them off, threw them away, and replaced them by others, a heap of which had been collected, his object being to melt the solder and tin, which ran quickly to the bottom of the fire, where a hole was made in the ground to receive it. 'I suppose you get a tidy lot of metal in this way?' I said to him. 'Pretty well,' he said. 'The sardine-boxes are the best.' 'Let me look at some of your metal.' He disappeared for a minute, and then brought me some rough-shaped pieces to look at. They were full of bits of cinder, etc., and not very saleable, even to marine-store dealers. I said, 'You have got good metal, but it is very dirty. Have you got an old saucepan about here?' He brought one, and I melted the metal over again, this time in the saucepan, and with the aid of a bit of wood skimmed off all the dross. 'Now for some clay.' He found some. We tempered it and flattened it as level as possible on the ground. A piece of cane about a foot long was found, a number of impressions of half the cane lengthways were made. Into these I poured his metal, and soon a number of sticks of solder, white, clear, and shining, were in his possession. 'Now you have got something worth having,' I said. 'You can get a good price for it. Now I have shown you how to do this, won't you give that little fellow his nine and sixpence back?' 'You must think I'm a mug. Why, I never

had it.' 'Come,' I said, 'you must think me a mug if you ask me to believe that. You know you had it. Hand it over, and I will take it to him. One good turn deserves another.' 'What do you think!' he said. I could get nothing from him, and I did not want to offend him, for I wanted to learn something from him. Presently I asked him how long he had lived in the 'dust-shoot.' He said five weeks, but I am inclined to believe he had been there much longer. After some persuasion he took me to his cave, which was on the other side of the 'shoot.' Here he had, in the side of the 'shoot,' excavated a short tunnel, at the end of which was his cave, not very commodious or comfortable; quite dark, except for his candle. Here he had his store of metal and anything else he picked up that was of any value. Here he had lived among all the festering rottenness for at least five weeks. On my asking him how many more lived in the 'shoot,' he said: 'Only five or six.' 'Any women here?' 'No fear!' I was told by another 'Gubbin' afterwards that at least twelve had caves, and that a woman came sometimes to one of them.

My method of dealing with the sardine boxes and other tins seems to have created quite an industry, but led two 'Gubbins' into trouble, for, quite three months after my visit to the shoot, two young fellows were charged with the unlawful possession of a number of 'sticks of solder.' A detective had followed them into a marine-store dealer's, where they offered the metal for sale. In vain they said that they had obtained it at the shoot; the detective's experience told him that the metal was not found there, so they were charged. I happened to be in court when they were before the magistrate. The youths told the magistrate how they had obtained it, and said that the missionary from the court had shown them how to do it. When the magistrate looked inquiringly at me, I had to own up, and the youths were discharged. Their metal was, of course, given back to them, so, while they were signing the 'Prisoners' Property Book,'and acknowledging receipt of their knives, etc.,

I examined the metal, and also came to the conclusion that it had not been procured from the 'shoot,' and that in all probability it had been stolen. I did not tell the police, but I took the young fellows aside, and asked them what they knew about me, and they said: 'Didn't you come on to the shoot and show us how to do it?' 'No,' I said, 'I did not, for I have never seen you in my life before.' 'Well, we saw you.' 'No lies!' I said: 'This metal has never been on the shoot. You vagabonds have stolen it, and then tell this tale, and it's pretty clever of you, for it has got you off.' I found on further inquiry that they had lived for a time in the shoot, and knew about my visit there, but they had never obtained any metal from the old tins.

I paid no further visits to the 'Gubbins'; they knew too much for me, and my last visit has been paid to Arcadia, for Hackney Wick knows it no more. I saw the last of it, and a sad and singular sight it was. The inhabitants were being 'moved off.' For months they had lived in their unclean simplicity, with no sanitary arrangements, and cut off from clean water. It was one dull day at the latter end of April; the rain fell gently all the day long, and the atmosphere was of a leaden hue. They had struck their tents, and were packing up when I got there, so I waited to see the last of them. My friends the midgets had packed their few boards, some sacking, an old kettle and saucepan, etc., on the barrow, and the little man pushing it, with his sister carrying her two babes—for the younger one had kept her word, and, with her bit of humanity, had gone into the workhouse—moved off in the dull mist, but where I never knew, for they would give me no information on the subject. The three young women had already gone. The poor fellow and his wife had their belongings on a wheelbarrow, and were 'moving off.' The caravans, with their ancient horses and numerous children, 'moved off.' Tent after tent was struck; in different directions the occupants 'moved off,' and Arcadia was no more.

CHAPTER XII

HOW THE POOR LIVE—AND DIE

One hot afternoon in July, in the hottest year of recent times, a man of about thirty-five years of age sat on a chair outside a very poor house in a very mean street of Hackney Wick. There was not a breath of air stirring, and, though the sun shone brilliantly, and the street was redolent with unsavoury smells, the poor fellow found the rays of the sun and the smells of the street preferable to the insufferably close atmosphere of the very little room—first floor back—in which he had lived for the last eighteen months. I had just come from a room where misery, poverty, and marvellous heroism had been strikingly illustrated. I neither saw the man nor smelt the unsavoury odours, for I was thinking of what I had seen, when I heard a faint but choking cough—one that told its story. I looked and stopped, and found myself face to face with the man on the chair.

His high cheek-bones, his hollow cheeks, and emaciated body and limbs told me that not much longer would he gasp for air in that unclean street, or lie waiting for death in his very, very small room. 'You are very ill,' I said, and he nodded his head. 'What is the matter?' 'Consumption, but it is nearly all over.' 'Would you not be more comfortable in a hospital?' 'I have been in the Chest Hospital, but there is no hope.' On further inquiry, I found that he was a single man, had no relations who knew or cared about him, and that he had come

from the hospital to live with strangers, hoping that his time would be short. 'But how do you manage to live?' I asked. 'Ah, sir,' he said, 'it is a race, and I don't know which will be gone first—my money or my life. I knew years ago what was the matter with me, and I have been very careful and saving, and I did hope that I should leave enough to pay for my funeral.' I got him some cooling drink, and told him that I would call and see him the following Tuesday, when I should again be in his neighbourhood.

I called on the appointed day, but his chair was not at the door, for he lay in his little room. When I went in he gave me his poor thin hand, saying: 'I am glad you have come.' I told him that if it gave him the least pleasure I would call every Tuesday afternoon. He looked at me and said: 'I am glad, because you have kept your word.' There was sad suggestiveness and deep pathos in his words and look. I had no need to inquire what he meant, for they told of promises lightly made and wickedly forgotten, of hopes raised never to be realized. After sponging his forehead with a little toilet vinegar, and putting a handful of flowers where he could fondle them, and a little fruit where he could reach it, I left him. Week by week I called upon him as he lay there waiting for the end in his stuffy little room. All the night long he lay alone, a very small, evil-smelling lamp for his companion; but night brought no relief, no welcome coolness, and all the night long, he told me, he lay and wished to God it were morning. But the morning and the brightness of the sun brought no welcome change, so during the day he lay and wished for the cool of the evening, for to sleep he had become a stranger. One day I called, and he was in great pain; he could not keep still, yet he had not strength to move. I wanted to soothe him, but I did not know how, so I said to him: 'How can I help you?' With his burning eyes he looked at me and said: 'Ask God to let me sleep—if I could, I might be easier—or die.' I knelt down by his bedside, and taking his poor hands into

mine; I prayed that sleep might come upon him; and then, silent and still, I knelt there hand in hand with him for some minutes, and lo! 'He gave His beloved sleep.' Quietly withdrawing my hands, I left him peacefully sleeping, and took my last look at him, for I never saw him again.

It was now well into August, and I had to leave London for a few weeks. The first day of my return I went to see him, but his final sleep had come, for he was dead and buried. On inquiry, the landlady told me that he had given her, just before he died, enough money to pay for his funeral; so the race had been run and the pauper's funeral had been avoided. She gave me a scrap of paper with some writing on it in pencil —I have it by me now. I never knew his name, he never knew mine—what did they matter? But this is what the paper says: 'Tell the kind gentleman I am not ungrateful; I hope he will forgive me, for I think God will. I cannot bear it any longer and am going to end it. He will not see me again.' I was told that after my last visit he again became sleepless, and that one day he got up and put on his clothes and wandered tremblingly into the street, making, as it seemed, for a canal close by. He told no one his errand; slowly, step by step, he went, till his weakened limbs could carry him no farther, for he fell exhausted close to the canal, but closer still to death; for he was carried to his little room, and God had mercy upon him. He left no debts unpaid; the rent of his little room had been discharged, all his landlady's claims had been satisfied, and his account balanced—no assets, no liabilities.

And the simple annals of the poor in the sordid misery and dirt of our slums furnish many an instance of stern independence and unfailing industry. But heroes are of no sex, and so I want to tell the story of the poor widow who lived but six doors from my unnamed friend. I had been visiting her when I came in contact with him. I met her at the police court; she had been dragged from the Lea and charged with attempted suicide. Her garments, few and old, clung to her

like cerements. Her hollow cough told its tale, and her face spoke of a pathetic hopelessness. She was a match-box maker, and, as I said, a widow. Her husband had been a wood-carver and a worker in the Ragged School. It was the fourth anniversary of his death. 'Promise me, Mary,' he had said, just before his death, 'that you will not let the children go into the workhouse.' She had willingly promised, and to her that promise was sacred. But it cost something to keep it.

She buried her husband, gathered her children round her, and with her bits of furniture went into one room, and proceeded to make her match-boxes. She had four children, and the youngest, a girl, was but two years old. I know that room, for I have been in it scores of times; it measures ten feet by eight. I know everything in that room, from its miserable bed to its paltry cupboard. I know the rent of that room: it is three shillings weekly—£7 16s. a year. She has now been in it nine years, and has paid over £70 in rent for that mean room. Here with her children four she set to work to redeem the promise made to her dying husband. Here in Christian London she made match-boxes at 2¼d. a gross, finding her own paste and thread. Here in the 'land of the free' she made match-boxes for fourteen hours a day, seven days to the week. Here she earned 1s. 3¾d. a day for her 'stint' of seven gross. Here she earned 9s. 2¼d. for her week's work of ninety-eight hours, plus fetching and returning her work, and minus the cost of her thread and paste. And so she essayed to live, and so she did live, for she had had four years of it when I first met with her. Too hopeless even for despair, she became a machine, and her heart became dead within her. No parish allowance for her, organized charity had nothing for her, and no Sister of Mercy or parish clergyman had visited in her little room, for she 'kept herself to herself.'

But I have forgotten an important item. The widow had a widowed mother, old and feeble, but who supported herself, and out of her penury allowed her daughter a shilling a week.

For three years and nine months after the death of her son-in-law the tottering old woman carried the shilling weekly to her daughter, and then she died and the shilling died with her. The loss of her mother and the shilling awoke some feelings in the dead heart of the match-box maker. For three months she struggled on, with her lessened means and the increasing wants of the children; and the anniversary of her husband's death came round. That afternoon, as she sat at her match-boxes, looking through her window, she saw a dead body drawn out of the Lea. At midnight there was a cry raised, 'A woman in the Lea!' So next day I met her in the police court.

She was not punished, God forbid! but the worthy magistrate kindly committed her to my care. So I went with her to that little room ten feet by eight. I saw the wistful children almost famished, and sadly wanting clothing. I sent in food for them, and next day went again with clothing for all of them. I took them out, and bought new boots for them all, mother included. I wish that I could describe the scene in that boot-shop when the children had on their new boots. Some people might have smiled and have been amused, but I could have choked, for, God help us! it was pitiful. The younger ones were filled with joy and childish wonder. The elder boy, about eleven, looked up and down, first at his boots and then at myself; his mouth twitched. He half laughed and half cried, until I said to him, 'How long is it since you had a new pair of boots?' 'I can't remember having a pair,' he said. But there sat the poor mother, hopeless and apathetic; the children's joy never stirred her, nor did their wonder move her. I paid her little debts. I filled their cupboard with food. I stopped her from work. I compelled her to go out of doors. All this I could do as I continued to visit her, but no smile could I bring to her face, no hope into her heart. I got her nice clothing, but even that created no interest; there was nothing but dull, passive apathy and increasing weakness.

It was summer-time, so the children were sent into the country, and the widow accompanied my wife and myself to the seaside. Two other women went with us ; both had broken down from sheer hard work and hopelessness. One was a fur-sewer, and had thrown herself in front of a train ; the other a blouse-maker, who had taken laudanum. Let me picture the poor woman as I often saw her and still continue to see her in that village by the sea. She was too weak to walk, so we placed a chair for her on the sands. There she would sit hour after hour with the same hopeless, apathetic, far-away look upon her face ; still and impassive she sat, save for the mysterious movements of her hands, for these were ever at work. Fourteen hours a day, seven days to the week, continued for years, had made those hands automatic, and they would make match-boxes in spite of her. Nature had its pound of flesh ! still oxygen, rest, good food, did much for her, and human sympathy helped by-and-by to cheer her. After a month she returned to her little room, to her children four, and to her match-boxes ; but not to fourteen hours a day, not to seven days a week. I reduced her ' stint ' to seven hours per day and six days per week. For four years I paid her rent and clothed the children, until her eldest boy was placed in a situation, and was able to help his mother. Reluctantly I then let her go, for new and fresh demands are ever made upon me. Still, she was not entirely forgotten, and a little help was sent her from time to time.

Several years passed when, in company with a friend, I called upon her—still in the little room, still at the everlasting match-boxes ; time, 1.30 p.m. From 6 a.m. she had been at it, and had just finished some work that must be sent back to the factory ; she had earned 7½d. I wish again that I could describe the woman this time in her room. There in the corner is the little bed and but scant clothing upon it, but the poor sheets are clean ; upon it lies her youngest child, a girl of eight. She has lain there eight weeks ill, and unable to move. No

parish doctor for the mother ; she is still too independent, and loves her child too much, to think of it, and she still remembers the promise made to the girl's father. So she works the harder and starves herself the more, in order to pay two shillings a visit to a doctor. I timidly suggested the infirmary for the child, but well I knew what the response would be, and it came. 'Don't separate us, don't separate us, Mr. Holmes. My heart is broke. I shan't be long after my child,' was all I could get from her. So I had again to begin my task, for I could not leave her in such misery.

I told her story to friends, and liberal help was sent for her. I was enabled to furnish two rooms for her and the children. The boys had grown taller, but again they got good new clothing and boots, and better situations were found for them. The little girl was again sent to the country, and is now going to school ; but the mother—the devoted, struggling mother—sometimes makes a few match-boxes ; but oftener she lies ill in her bed, from which she will sometimes rise, and with failing strength, but with desperate endeavour, try to wash the sheets and clothing that have been provided for her. And so down to the grave she will go, working and struggling, her only hope to live long enough to see her children self-supporting—a hope that will not be realized.

And such lives abound ; it is my sad duty to meet with them —it is my joy and privilege to help them. Great are the opportunities given to my colleagues and myself to right some of the wrongs, to undo some of the evil, that our present-day civilization inflicts upon the innocent and the helpless. Men and women apparently forgotten alike of God and man meet us. Their very hopelessness appeals to us, and it must not appeal in vain. I can fight with a dipsomaniac, as Paul fought with beasts at Ephesus. I can throw myself into the existence of a burglar, till he becomes part and parcel of myself. I can feel a deep pity for the vice and drink smitten women upon the streets of London, but to the poor, the honest, hopeless, strug-

gling, dying poor, my very heart goes out. 'They are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none crieth, Restore!'

'But do you meet with any gratitude?' I am often asked, for the ingratitude of the poor is a pet theme with many. I don't go about the world looking for gratitude; if I did, I should not meet it. I want to see wrong redressed, toil lessened, comfort increased, homes replenished, children made glad, and sad hearts comforted. If I can see these things, I get joy, and never think of gratitude, but nevertheless it comes to me even when I do not look for it, and the following instance may show it.

A married man had been sent to prison for six months, and richly he merited his sentence, for he had grossly assaulted his wife, the mother of eight children. He was a violent drunkard, and it was by no means his first offence. The wife was sadly injured, and was broken and nervous from the repeated assaults. But the home had to be kept together, and the children fed. She lived in the slums and became the prey of the sweater. One Sunday afternoon I called at her house, and knocked at the door, but there was no answer. The glass panel in the door being broken, I had no difficulty in gaining access. The various families in the different rooms took no notice of me as I went upstairs to a room the door of which stood open. I stood on the threshold for a moment and took in the whole scene. The woman, facing the window that overlooked a miserable 'yard,' sat at a sewing-machine, the incessant rattle of which told me that she was working for life. Her back was towards me, so she neither saw nor heard me. Before she had finished her seam I had time to notice that the floor was covered with ladies' blouses, at the making of which she was earning the fancy price of tenpence per dozen, finding her own machine and thread. Last week she had made twelve dozen blouses, and had sat at the machine 108 hours for her ten shillings, earning somewhere about one penny per

hour. She finished her seam, threw the garment to the heap, and turned to take another, when she caught sight of me, uttered a frightened scream, and fell off her seat into the heap of blouses. I called to one of her neighbours, and we gathered her up, when I could not fail to notice her condition—soon again to be a mother. I put the strap of the machine into my pocket and left her five shillings, the price of fifty-four hours' work. In a few days I called again, and found her in bed, waited on by a little girl of ten who had now another little sister. A reference to this particular visit and the poverty she was in is made in the letter, of which I give a copy. But there, lying weak and ill, she inquired for the strap of the machine, which I gave to her, and in less than a week from her confinement the rattle of the machine was heard in her room.

I continued to visit her till the time approached when her husband would be released, a time to which she looked forward with dread. She told me this repeatedly. The day the husband was released I went to the house to meet him, for I thought my services might be useful. The husband was there, but the wife had gone, taking her children with her. None of the neighbours knew where she had gone—she had kept silence on the matter—but gone she was, much to her brutal husband's consternation, for he was now homeless. I tried several times to find her, but quite in vain, so I gave up the search: But I knew she was hiding from her husband, and was afraid to let me know her address lest he should find it out.

Two years went by, and I neither saw nor heard anything of her, when, on Christmas morning, I received a letter which contained no address or name; but it was from her. This is the letter:

'DEAR SIR,

'I hope this will find you and all your family quite well. I hope this Christmas will be a happy one, and that in the New

Year God's blessing may be with you in all your labours: That you may have good health and happiness, I sincerely pray; that your life may be long spared, I earnestly hope, for you to cheer the oppressed and the broken-hearted. You will, I know, continue to feed the hungry and to clothe the naked and to visit the sick, for you have done it to me many a time. Sometimes, when I have lain helpless on my bed, waited on by a little child, with only thin water-gruel, without sugar, to eat, you, sir, have come in with your helping hands, and have said: "You must have something better"; and you would bring it. Had it not been for you, my children would have gone hungry many a time, for often the last slice had gone, and the last bit of coal had been burnt, when you would again come in and bring more. I do not ask anything from you. I shall not let you know who I am. I am almost past help in this world, but I feel that I must let you know that your kindness to me is not and cannot be forgotten. May God answer the prayers I have offered for you. They shall be answered, for the King Himself shall answer, and say unto you: "Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these, you have done it unto Me"; and you shall enter into joy. May God bless you!

'From a Poor Well-wisher.'

And that was from a slum woman, but not born in the slums. To me there is no cant in that letter. I know it is permeated through and through with heartfelt gratitude. I never found her or heard more from her, but I feel that she no longer dreads the return of her brutal husband, no longer makes blouses at tenpence per dozen, no longer makes the machine fly eighteen hours for one-and-eightpence; for ere this the weary woman is at rest, and the wicked cease to trouble her.

This awful life of the slums, how strangely it acts and reacts upon our poor humanity! It brings out the worst, it brings out the best; it debases men and women, it ennobles them.

Vice and misery ramp and crawl, but purity, love, and gentleness are not absent. Outstretched hands and suppliant looks tell that many are eager for the least boon that pity can bestow; but stern, unyielding independence is by no means an absent quality.

But I must tell another story of the same summer-time and of the same locality, for my unknown friend, my match-box widow, and the poor blouse-maker lived within a few minutes' walk of each other, and close by is a horrid, unclean court, and the sun poured its torrid rays into it. It is a very narrow court, and frowsy women from their doorsteps on either side can bandy words with each other. Sometimes they meet in the roadway, and fights are not unknown. Women of a positive character live in that court, and, coming home at two o'clock in the morning, make it hideous with their lewd and drunken blasphemies. Labouring men live there too, some of whom, on returning from work, find their wives drunk, and no semblance of an evening meal; then, heigho! for the crashing blow, the brutal kick, and the yell of the trampled wife. In a room on the ground-floor of one of the houses lies a woman waiting for death—death that tarries, for she has lain there for months—and was so long, so 'unconscionably long in dying' that her husband, by assaulting her, had tried to expedite the process, and was sent to prison for six months for his pains. Her little bed is underneath the window, close on to the pavement, and she can hear the wrangling of the women, the crying and quarrelling of the children, the blasphemy of the 'unfortunate,' the maudlin talk of the drunken wife, and the blow of the brutal husband. She has no respite from these things; neither has she any respite from pain, for she is in the last grip of internal cancer. She has been operated on twice in a London hospital, but there was no hope, so she said: 'I will go home and die among my children.' She has four of them, and the eldest is a girl of fourteen, who earns four shillings a week at a laundry. The husband no sooner receives his well-merited

six months than out of a neighbouring workhouse comes an old woman of sixty-five, mother of the cancer-stricken woman. She enters into an agreement with a working-man, who has lost his wife, to keep house for him and look after his five children. Four shillings a week she is to receive for her onerous task. And every Saturday afternoon the old woman's four shillings are added to the four earned by the girl, and not till the cancer has done its worst (or its best), not till the grave has closed over her daughter, not till the husband has come back to his children—not till then does the old woman seek again the shelter of the workhouse, there to wait for the rest and oblivion that has come to her daughter.

Week by week for six months I visited the cancerous woman, giving her such help and comfort as I might; but what a six months for her! Unable at length to take food, she starved slowly toward death; but she lasted till the husband came back to her, and he came—drunk! He had earned a gratuity of seven shillings while in prison, and he was violently drunk at mid-day, when I arrived on the scene. I soon drew his attention to myself, and as he followed me along the street, and was grossly insulting, he again got taken into custody, and was remanded for a week to give his wife time to die. Poor woman! she cried after him, and with her failing breath told me she wanted to see him once more before she died. She had her wish, for after a week's remand he was discharged, and I saw to it that he went home sober, for I went with him. In a week's time there was a parish funeral from that court, attended by an old woman of sixty-five and a girl of fourteen. Brave old woman! the five pounds you so hardly earned shall be appraised at its proper value by Him who noted the widow's mite. You can go back to the workhouse, and there die, cheered, comforted, and strengthened by the knowledge that you enabled your daughter to die outside, and the memory of that shall come to you as an angel's smile when the time comes for you to join your daughter.

But there are poor people outside the slums, and suffering is borne with marvellous endurance in many respectable streets. Unfortunately, married men well placed will commit crimes, and have to pay the penalty, or, rather, their wives and families pay the penalty. Mercy! how they suffer! If the crime, one against property, be repeated, as it often is, then the very perfection of suffering is felt and endured by the wives and families left behind. Their friends cast them off, for the lustre of their respectability must not be soiled, even by contact with a suffering wife and innocent children. Down, down they go; bit by bit the home disappears, until there are only a few relics left of a once comfortable home, and these are worthless. Pass along some of these streets, and you will find cards in some of the basement windows announcing 'Plain needlework done by hand,' or 'Pianoforte taught on moderate charges.' My life for it, there are tragedies being enacted in those breakfast parlours down in the basement.

To such a place I went one Christmas Eve. A man who had held first-class positions was sent for trial on a charge of embezzlement. Three terms of imprisonment for similar offences had not sufficed to cure him of dishonesty. When he was convicted, I saw weeping at the back of the court a decent-looking woman, who carried a sickly-looking child. I had some conversation with her, and found that the prisoner just committed was her husband. She lived two miles away, and had walked to the court, carrying the child, two years of age, because she had no money to pay her fare, and the child was too ill to be left at home with the other children. She wanted to see what became of her husband, who, to use her own expression, had 'been so good' to her. I saw that the child was dangerously ill, and that she herself was faint; so I gave her a few shillings and sent her 'home' in a cab, promising to call upon her.

About a fortnight elapsed before I did so, and as I descended the steps that led to her breakfast-parlour I heard the strains

of an old worn-out piano and the sound of children's voices. Curiosity prompted me to stand outside a moment before I rapped, when I learned that children were dancing and singing within. I thought at first I would go without seeing her, for I came to the conclusion that things were looking up and my assistance would not be wanted, but I ultimately decided otherwise; so I rapped, and she came to the door and asked me in. 'You are merry to-night,' I said to her. 'Hush!' she said, as she led me into the room among the children, of whom there were twelve. They were all nicely dressed, and had slippers on. There was not much in the room. On the floor was a very worn and faded carpet, that had been a good one; and, as I have said, the pianoforte was a very old one. I could not understand, so I said: 'You are having a party, I see.' She did not speak, and I could see that her eyes were swollen and red. Presently she lit a small lamp and beckoned me to follow her into a small bedroom, divided from the front-room by folding-doors. As we went in she closed the doors carefully behind us, and, with the little lamp in her hand, went up to a small bed and turned down the sheet, and then looked at me. I took the lamp from her and looked. There lay the two-year-old child that I had seen at the court, but its sufferings were over, for it lay cold and still. 'And you are having a children's party?' 'Oh, no, no! I must do it or starve. The children pay me sixpence a week, and come three evenings to learn dancing and a little singing.' Yes, she sat at the old cracked instrument playing whilst happy children danced and the child of her own body lay dead within six feet of her. Yes, and she also went to respectable houses to teach music, playing and singing, where they paid an accomplished woman threepence per lesson of one hour's duration. So she lived and worked and hoped for her husband's return, for he had 'been so good' to her. I gave her such clothing as enabled her to appear respectable, for 'respectability' demands that a music-teacher, even at threepence per hour, shall not appear poor.

But some streets are so 'respectable' that Mrs. Grundy will not allow the music-teacher or the plain sewer to exhibit their cards in their windows, either in the basement or the third floor up. It must not be known that poor struggling women pay exorbitant rents for single rooms in such houses, but they do, nevertheless. 'Whited sepulchres' are many of these houses, and the cheap lace curtains at all the windows and the artificial plants make pitiful pretence of comfort within. To such houses and the various rooms in such houses I am no stranger. I have seen old women hugging their respectability, and ready to perish; I have seen younger ones living lives that have filled me with wonder; I have seen husbands and wives hoping against hope, and trying to comfort each other, for not always does love fly out at the window when poverty comes in at the door.

In the top room of one of these houses I met with the most wonderful instance of sisterly devotion it has ever been my lot to meet with. I will picture it. Two sisters, only servant-girls, but their room is scrupulously clean, and even tastily furnished. The furniture is old, but the best is made of it. A pretty screen keeps the draught from the bed, on which lies one of the sisters, who is twenty-four years of age, and has lain there seven years. A piece of linen steeped in eau-de-Cologne is across her forehead; underneath her half-closed eyes are dark rings; the cartilage of her nose is almost as thin as writing-paper, and is constantly quivering; her face is pale as death itself, and her faint breath comes in quick vibrations from the top of her throat. Yonder sits her sister, at work with her needle; she is almost as pale as the invalid, and suffers from occasional hæmorrhage. Ten years ago both parents died, and the elder sister made a promise to her dying father that she would 'look after' the younger. Some of the furniture was put safely by, and hand in hand into service both girls went, and a year or two passed. But the younger one was delicate. The influenza soon got hold of her, and

remained with her so long that she had to leave service—but not for the hospital or infirmary.

An empty room was taken, the remains of their parents' furniture was put into it, and to her lonely room and bed the younger one was taken. Four-and-sixpence weekly was paid for that empty room. They had saved a little money, but a servant's wages are small, and it soon went. After the influenza came all sorts of complications, paralysis and spinal disease, etc.; so the younger sister, a child in appearance but a woman in years, has lain on her bed ever since, nursed, waited on, lifted in and out of bed by her sister, who worked for the pair. For the first four years the elder sister remained in service, nursing and keeping house for two old ladies, visiting her sister every morning, washing her, tidying the room, and putting her food to hand; this had to be liquid food, in a baby's sucking-bottle; for this was the only way in which the younger could take nourishment, and, her right arm being helpless, the bottle had to lie close to the left. Every night, after she had put her old ladies to bed, the elder would return again to the younger sister, and arrange for her comfort during the night. The younger one was left alone day and night except for the sister's visits. This was their life for years; but her wages were not enough to keep the pair and pay rent. So she took in plain sewing, unknown to her sister or the old ladies, and sat regularly into the small hours of the morning, stitching away for private customers—hence her cough and hæmorrhage. But the old ladies died and were buried, and had no more need of her services, so now the sisters are living together, and stitch, stitch, stitch is the order of the day and night. She does not work for the factory or the sweater, but for private customers, who like their work done by hand and done well.

Done by hand! and her earnings are no better than the match-box makers or the blouse-makers, for a shilling a day is the average. Yet she never complains, but goes on steadfastly, quietly, and persistently with her work and her duty. Seeking no help, and hiding her poverty from the world, on

she goes, no change, no holiday, no rest, excepting when she herself is ill; then, to keep the knowledge of that illness from her poor little sister, she wraps herself in a rug and takes her rest—not on the bed, but on the hearthrug.

And very thoughtless many ladies are. A couple of months the elder sister worked nearly a week, and earned five shillings. The work was all for one lady, who praised the work when it was taken home, saying she would send her more and pay for them altogether, when the work was finished. Weeks passed on, and there came no more work nor the five shillings that were so badly wanted. Four applications by letter were made before a postal order was received to discharge the debt, and the poor creature lost fourpence in postage.

'Evil is wrought by want of thought, as well as want of heart,' is a truth that I have often seen illustrated in our police courts. A woman about thirty-six years of age once stood in the dock, charged with being drunk. Her head was bandaged, and her mantle, which had seen much better days, was covered with blood. She had fallen from a tramcar, was picked up insensible and smelling of drink, was taken by the constable to the police station, and the doctor fetched to attend to her injuries, who stated that she was recovering from the effects of drink. So she was charged. She gave no name, no address, nor occupation, and when before the magistrate she was silent except for protesting tearfully that she was not drunk. She was ordered to pay the doctor's fee, and having no money, was placed in the cells. Through the little trap-door I spoke to her, when I noticed that she had a parcel with her, also bespattered with blood. She was badly hurt, and quite broken-hearted at being a prisoner. I might have paid her three-and-sixpence, but I saw that she was ill and not fit to go home by herself, so I begged her to tell me where she lived, that I might see her friends. She resolutely declined at first, but after an hour in the cell she sent for me and told me where she lived, but asked me not to call till two o'clock, as her aunt, who lived with her, would not be home before.

At a quarter past two I called, and the rap I gave at the door told me that there was no linoleum on the passage floor, and but little furniture in the house. To my surprise a nicely dressed and beautiful girl of about sixteen came to the door. I told her that I had called to see the aunt, and had come from the niece, who was injured, but not seriously. She told me they had been anxious about her mother, who went to take some work home the day before, and had not returned. I did not tell the girl where her mother was, but took stock of the house. There was no carpet on the floor, and three Windsor chairs, a deal table, and a sewing-machine formed the only furniture—no other goods, save two oil-paintings without frames on the wall. I looked at them and said to the girl: 'Whose portraits are these?' 'Grandpa's and grandma's,' was the answer. 'They were gentlepeople?' I said. 'Yes,' she said; 'we used to have a carriage when I was little.'

Just then I heard someone fumbling with a latch-key at the door, and presently in came the aunt, old and wrinkled, bent with age and trouble. Dressed in old-fashioned and badly-worn clothing, black cotton gloves an inch too long for her fingers, she stood and looked at me askance. I told her my errand, for the girl had left us alone. The trembling old woman sat down, put her glove-covered hands to her face, and rocked herself backward and forward, and I could see the tears trickling down. Presently she stood up, and tremblingly drew off one of her gloves, and said, 'That's all we have in the world, sir, and that is my parish allowance; I have just been to fetch it.' I looked at her old skinny hand, and there in the palm lay a solitary half-crown. The girl was called in again, when I told her that I was taking her aunt to her mother, and that shortly both would be back again. The old lady was so feeble and excited that I had to support her till we got a conveyance. When we got to the court, I had again to give her my arm; but when I had paid the doctor's fee and the cell-door was opened to her niece, she wanted none of my support; for, as soon as she saw her niece coming up the passage, she

loosed her hold of me and with eager steps and a pitiful cry ran toward the tottering woman; and presently their arms were round each other, and the bruised face of the younger woman was laid against the furrows and wrinkles of the older woman, while their tears blended together.

I thought it best to see them 'home,' but they did not offer to tell me who they were; they did, however, tell me that the girl was a member of a well-known choir, and was only 'home' for a short holiday. I found out, though, what had brought the younger woman to the police court. She had taken home some finished work to a lady, who praised it and gave her more work to do. Unfortunately, she did not think of paying her, but more unfortunately still, she gave her a glass of spirits. Doubtless it was meant kindly, but it was disastrous; for the woman was weak for want of proper food, and in just that condition of body and mind when some food would have been most useful. Having to return home by tramcar, and the inside being full, she had to mount the outside. Just as she got to the top, and before she could get a seat, the car started, and overboard she went. The spirits had doubtless made her a bit giddy, but she told me that she would not have fallen but for the car starting too soon—in fact, before she was off the steps. I called again to see them. The girl had rejoined her choir; the wrinkled old lady sat in the almost empty house, thinking, thinking, everlastingly thinking of the past; the younger one with her bruised face and head still bandaged, sat at her machine. Once more I called, and the house was empty, and a bill was in the window. They were gone—and I never knew where. Neither did I ever learn whence they came or who they were; but this much I did gather, that the aunt's means, as well as the fortune of the family, had been squandered by the husband of the younger woman.

So many gently-born come down into our slums, and compete with the poorest of the poor for a bare and miserable existence; but they mix not with the coarse and the lewd that abound around them; they seek no help, and never flaunt

their poverty. Silently and in obscurity they go down to their doom of starvation. Sometimes they will come to the court and gasp their sorrow out to the magistrate, but not often, unless, indeed, it is some man or woman brought low by their vices. In such self-respect is dead, and they are ever ready to trade upon their past affluence, and are by no means ashamed to beg; but those who have been brought low by the wrong-doing of others present a pathetic spectacle.

I have before me now an old letter which came to me at the police court. It reads as follows:

'Dear Sir,

'For God's sake, come and see us! This is a forlorn hope.'

As it gave the name and address of the writer, I went, and again it was Christmas Eve. The snow lay deep on the ground, and a hard frost had bound it together; the fog was choking and almost impenetrable, when about seven in the evening I found myself knocking at the door of the house. There was no light in the passage, but someone—I could not see who—answered the door. I inquired for Miss G——, and the voice said: 'Downstairs.' The door closed, the owner of the voice went away, and I was left in complete darkness. I struck a match, and by the aid of its feeble light found the ramshackle staircase that led below. I groped for a door, found one, and again knocked, and it was opened. A middle-aged woman with an old shawl round her head stood before me, a small benzoline lamp in her hand. Her face was so swollen that her features would not have been recognised even by friends. I told her my errand, and she asked me in and gave me a chair. It was an uncanny place. The fog penetrated the room, and the small, smoky lamp scarcely relieved the gloom. I had not been seated a moment before I was aware that there was something or somebody alive in one corner of the room, for a difficult and almost choking breathing was very audible. Beyond asking me in, the woman in the shawl had not spoken,

so, lifting the little lamp from the table, I went to the corner, and very soon found a pair of eyes gazing into mine. The eyes and the breathing belonged to another woman, who lay on a miserable bed in the corner. She was evidently near death, and could not speak to me, so I found my way to the chair. 'Who is she?' I asked quietly of the woman in the shawl. 'My sister.' 'She is very ill?' I said. 'She is dying,' was the reply. 'Have you had the doctor?' 'Yes; the parish doctor has just gone away, and he says she won't last till morning.' 'Why did you write to me?'

She cried silently for some time, and then she told me that they had lived together for years, getting a living by making ladies' aprons, etc., for the shops; that for a long time past her sister had been failing, and that for the past three months she had lain on that bed. She told me also how her own eyes had been gradually weakening, and her own earnings had fallen off, and, to make things worse, for the past month she had been half mad with neuralgia. So they had got behind with their rent, and the landlady was constantly abusing them and threatening to turn them out. They were the daughters of a once thriving tradesman. The dying sister had married a professor of languages, and with her husband had lived for a long time in Germany and France. Her husband had lived expensively and died suddenly, leaving his wife unprovided for. She herself had kept house for her father—she scarcely remembered her mother—and after the death of her father, who left her some little money, her sister joined her, and they tried to eke it out by doing needlework. But their earnings were small, and by degrees their bit of money went, and now sickness and death had come, and they were penniless. I made no more inquiries. I could see for myself that poverty and death were in that murky room. So I satisfied the landlady, sent in some coals, nourishment, and a better lamp. On Christmas Day, by the aid of this lamp, she saw her sister die, and a few days afterwards she stood by the grave of that sister,

who had been given a common—very common—interment by the parish.

Several years they had lived in that underground room; a street grating was over their only window, and over that grating children played, and hundreds of people tramped daily knowing nothing of the tragedy going on underneath. But I helped her out of the cellar to a first-floor back, where there was a good window. I obtained a pair of spectacles to aid her weakened eyes, and she said she could keep herself, for old women think they can do wonders. I heard no more of her for years, but one day there came a small package to me. There was no letter, but the package contained a silver German coin, nicely mounted and made into a brooch; it was wrapped in a piece of paper, on which was written: 'In memory. Forlorn hope.' Either the workhouse or the grave—most probably the latter—has swallowed her.

But the numbers of poor women, devoted sisters, who go hand in hand to the grave is not limited. I have met with many such. About many of them there is nothing picturesque, no story to tell, but their lives are lives of devotion, and one might well marvel and say: 'Behold, how these sisters love each other!' The faults of the poor are well known to us; if they are not, 'tis not for the want of telling. The marvel is that they are as good as they are, for of many it may be said, 'Hope is not for them.' And yet to go on, month after month, year after year, with their self-imposed duties, with their hard, onerous, and ill-requited toil, uncheered and uninspired by hope, makes the marvel the greater and their lives the more noble. Some, as I have shown, become apathetic, and work on as machines, but still on and on with their drudgery they go, until welcome and well-earned death comes to them. But with others it is far different, for their hope has turned to bitterness, and though they never dream of relinquishing the struggle, and never seem to realize that old age is coming upon them, yet they retain a stern, rugged, and sometimes even a

pugnacious independence when, after many weary years, well-meant assistance is offered them. 'Hope deferred maketh the heart sick.'

But let me tell a story. I have told it before, but I want to tell it again. Standing in the dock of one of our police courts is a tall, spare woman of fifty-five. Her dress is of rusty black, and has done duty for many a year. Her bonnet, surmounted by a veil, is also black, and of ancient type. Her face tells of years of suffering, and bears that wistful look that is generally found on the faces of those that are stone-deaf. The gaoler stands beside her with a slate, on which are written down bits of the evidence for her to read. The officer in the witness-box says that about ten o'clock the previous night—a cold, dark night in February—he was on duty by the Lea, when he heard a splash and a cry. By the aid of his lantern he saw a black object in the water; he swam towards it, and found the prisoner, who said, 'Let me die! Let me die!' With difficulty he got her out, for she had tied a satchel round her waist, and in the satchel he found a flat-iron.

Following the officer in the witness-box came a little elderly woman, a small edition of the prisoner, but bent with hard work, her face furrowed and wrinkled. Her hands were twisted and gnarled like the roots of a tree; every joint was enlarged with rheumatics: they told a tale of hard, incessant toil. For thirty years, day after day, year after year, she had stood at the wash-tub and scrubbed out the social salvation of herself and sister.

The prisoner, she said, lived with her, and had done so for many years. Thirty years ago her sister had brain fever, and lost completely her sense of hearing. She was also detained for a short time in an asylum, out of which place she came to live with her. She had been ill many times since, and lately had not seemed happy. Yesterday the witness went to fetch home some work, and when she got back her sister had disappeared. Under an inverted basin on the table she found two pennies, a piece of cake, and a note which read as follows:

'DEAR EMMA,

'I have been a great burden to you; for more than thirty years you have worked for me, and now you are getting old, and will not be able to work for me much longer. Good-bye; you will never see me again.'

She begged the magistrate to allow her to take her sister home again; her sister was no burden to her. She could easily keep her, and would promise to look well after her. The magistrate kindly agreed to this, and asked me to render what help I could, so I went home with them; and I shall not forget going, for that poor little home is before me now, with all its spare, old-fashioned, respectable poverty, and its scrupulous cleanliness. It bore eloquent witness to the work and struggles of the pair. A week later I was in that little home again on a very glad errand. I had ten golden sovereigns to give them, and my wife was with me to see the joy of the sisters, and to share in my pleasure. Ten golden sovereigns! What would they not do for the sisters? Coal, food, warm clothing, and rest were all in those shining bits of metal. I loved the chink of the metal for the sake of the two women. The skinny arms were bared to the elbows, the gnarled and twisted fingers were in the soap-suds when I told her my errand, and put the money before her.

She looked at me strangely for a moment, and then, straightening up her old bent body, she lifted up her hands before me and said, almost fiercely, 'Sir, do you see these hands? For thirty years they have worked for and kept my poor sister. I have had no charity from parson or parish; not one penny have I received from anyone, and, please God, I never will. I can work for my sister. Take the money back to the sender. I dare say it was meant kindly, but there is none of it for us.'

Argument and persuasion were of no avail; the indomitable little woman was proof against both: not a penny would she

receive. The money might be sent back, or I might use it for the poor who needed it, but not for them—not for them. So she gathered the money up and gave it back to me. Had I not taken it, she would have thrown it into the street. Foolish old woman! but brave, heroic old woman! We left her with full hearts, and the chink of the money was not quite so joyous. Years ago timely help and kind sympathy might have cheered and comforted her, but now it is too late, for she will die rather than receive it. Years have gone by, but the pair are still living together. A few Sundays ago I met them out for a walk, both looking older and more feeble, their ancient clothing still more rusty; both living the same hard lives, hand in hand, down to the grave they go. It will be a mercy if they can cross the bourne together, for brave, steadfast, and heroic in their lives, even death should not divide them. The story of Charles Lamb and his sister lives; his love and devotion to his poor sister will never be forgotten, for his love almost passed the love of women. Up and down the neighbourhood where these sisters live Charles and Mary Lamb had many times wandered hand in hand. Can the example of the witty writer and loving heart have influenced the poor washerwomen? No, for she never heard of him. Only the promptings of her own true heart were needed, only the feeble strength of a little woman was required, only unceasing toil, only perpetual pain, only reticent poverty, sustained for many a year, and a life was lived, endurance exhibited, and a devotion shown that will compare with any lives of which I have ever heard or read, and will not lose in the comparison. But she was only a poor washerwoman!

So in their little homes, in their crowded tenements, high up in the 'blocks,' or low down in their underground bedrooms, the poor live, so they die. I could tell of their sins, and of their vices, but that would be no pleasure to me; so I tell of their virtues and sorrows, of their patience and love, of their sufferings and wrongs.

CHAPTER XIII

THE PROBLEM OF HOME WORKERS

Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth must speak, so in this chapter I deal with an old, old subject. Generations come and go; in a hundred directions improvement follows on the heels of improvement. For most men the hours of toil have been considerably lessened. Factory and workshop inspection has done wonders. Employers' liability for the health and safety of their servants has been forcibly brought home. But, strange to say, the condition of the London home workers is practically the same as it was in Hood's time. True the silent 'stitch, stitch, stitch' of the needle plied by 'fingers weary and worn' has given place to the never-ceasing rattle of the sewing-machine; but little else is altered, for the incessant toil and misery of the workers remain as before—nay, worse—for a hundred other trades have sprung up to the seamstresses' company, the conditions of which are equally bad, and in some cases worse, than the conditions under which the seamstresses live and die. Commissions have sat, inquiries have been made, Blue-Books have been filled with evidence, people have wept, philanthropists have poured out their wealth, but all in vain, for the evil is still with us, our sorrow and our shame.

It has often been urged against moving stories of fiction that, while they stir the emotions, they provide no outlet for practical sympathy, and that stirring the well-springs of pity

out of mere caprice is but to demoralize. I am afraid my last chapter is somewhat open to this charge. I know it has touched the hearts of a good many people, for I have received some hundreds of letters with regard to it; I also know, and have good reasons for knowing, that most of the writers were not content that their emotions should be stirred and no practical result ensue.

'You have saddened us.' 'What can we do?' 'What are you going to do?' So wrote one lady, and she voiced the thoughts of many. Neither was it the female heart alone that was stirred, for I soon became aware that in writing on the sufferings of London's oppressed women I had touched the heart of humanity.

'We are full of trouble here, and we have our own sorrows, but I send you a draft for £25 to make some of those women happier.' So wrote a member of the Legislative Assembly of Natal. 'I have been farming out here for twenty-five years but I have never forgotten Hood's "Song of the Shirt." I send you £10 to help those poor women.' Thus wrote a farmer in Cape Colony. From Australia and from Ireland, Scotland, and Wales letters came, and the purport of them all was, 'Can't you do something to make the poor women happier?'

For more years than I care to remember I had hoped and longed for a Home of Rest for these women, to which I could send the poorest of them. Africa and Australia gave me out of the goodness of their hearts the nucleus of the fund that enabled me to do it.

But the women of London were not behindhand, for a number of them formed themselves into a 'Farthing League' (they could not give large sums) for the support of the Home.

'The members of the league pledge themselves to subscribe to its funds the odd farthing on every article and every yard of material bought at a draper's shop.' Each member has a box into which the odd farthings or pence, as the case may be, are dropped. The members appoint their own secretary

and treasurer. Even from our own Royal Family came a voice wishing success to the Home of Rest, and some help for the undertaking.

But while these combined to make my task the easier, what made it imperative was the sight of a weary-faced, bloodless woman that sat on a chair in North London Police Court before the magistrate. 'Give her a seat,' said the kindly magistrate; 'she is too ill to stand in the dock.' She had tottered into one of our police stations and given herself up for stealing a dozen skirts which had been given her to make at 1s. 3d. per dozen, she finding machine and thread and paying carriage of the articles to and from the factory. It was cold winter time; she had four young children and a husband out of work. 'You are drunk,' they said to her. 'No, no; it's the laudanum,' she said. Her skirts had been finished, she had no fire, and the children wanted food. So she pawned them, kindled a fire, and fed her children. Then fear took possession of her. 'I am a thief; they will send me to prison,' she said. But she had a few coppers left. Laudanum was bought, but not sufficient to quench the faint spark of life in her weak body. 'I remand her for a week; take her to Holloway in a cab, and let the doctor's attention be called to her,' said the worthy magistrate. In a week's time she was again before him, and was promptly discharged. 'Do what you can to help her,' he said to me.

Help her! Why, she had scarcely flesh enough to cover her bones, nor clothing enough to provide a semblance of warmth. She needed food, clothing, rest, fresh air, and human sympathy. I knew that in her own wretched home she could not get them, so I started my Seaside Home of Rest for Weary Women. Here is a letter from her:

'Dear Sir,

'I am constantly thinking of your kindness, and I think that I should be ungrateful if I did not write to you. God has

answered my prayer, for I asked Him to take me out of my trouble. Oh, sir, I have only had one day's holiday in fifteen years, and that was when I went with my first little boy to a Sunday-school treat. I feel that I should like to have more faith in God. I believe in Him, I tell Him my troubles, but I have no faith, and I forget His day (she worked on Sundays). I want to be a happy woman, but my life has been so hard, so very hard. I am feeling stronger, but I cannot lose the horror of what I have done; but do believe me, for I am grateful to the magistrate and you for the great kindness shown to me.

'Yours gratefully.'

Fifteen years of hopeless, unending toil and of practical starvation are enough to quench the hope that is said to 'spring eternal in the human heart,' and without hope there can be no faith. How could the woman believe in a God of Love? Her story is common enough. Down to my little Home at Walton there has been a procession of such women. I wish that I could march them before my readers, each poor woman carrying a 'brown-paper parcel,' for bags, portmanteaus, or boxes have not been seen among them. No elastic step among them. Bent bodies, faces wrinkled and like to discoloured parchment. Some younger bodies, but still whitish and bloodless faces, whose eyes are dull, and no sparkle of joy in them; plenty of passivity, but no glint of fire. Some with a child each, some with two, for the children must be cared for. Some, too, alas! bruised and battered, for even the passivity of a wage-earning machine wife is no security against the brutality of a husband when the 'potion works within him.'

Such are the women for whom I have been compelled to care. Sometimes I go down and spend a week-end with them, and I would that I could do justice to a description of them. But I cannot. In the evening before they retire to the strange luxuries of clean sheets we gather round the piano and sing an evening hymn, and I listen to their quavering voices in every key and in no key at all.

'Watch by the sick, enrich the poor
With blessings from Thy boundless store.'

Then I feel there is something wrong, for my eyes get dim and my throat lumpy. But I read to them, 'Are not two sparrows sold for one farthing? Not one shall fall without your Father's knowledge. Fear not; ye are of more value than many sparrows.' I know they can make sure of the Heavenly love. I would to God I could feel more sure of earthly love and earthly store, too, for them, for they get precious little of either!

But while I am writing this, February 6, a letter reaches me from the matron, asking questions about my arrangement for the future life of one of the women, and, like most ladies, she adds a postscript: 'P.S.—Excuse this short letter, but they are making so much noise, laughing and shouting and playing ping-pong, that I am bewildered.' Sweated drudges, hopeless, broken women, laughing, shouting, and playing ping-pong! I felt rewarded for my trouble. The sea air, good food, and rest, are fine tonics even in the winter.

Appetite comes by eating. The desire to increase happiness increases by giving happiness. I am not content, neither do I want to be content. Did not old Augustine say, 'The man that says "Enough!" that man's soul is lost?' I have tasted the delight of making some of the poorest and most miserable glad, and I long to see more fully the realization of my hopes. I am told by some worthy people that I am 'spoiling' these women. I want to. 'You will make them dissatisfied with their own homes.' I hope I may, for the apathetic content of the poor with their dirt and misery constitutes the greatest danger. From such content may God deliver them! But who can estimate the value to these hard-working women of a few weeks' rest and refreshment at a place where the life-giving qualities of the sea may invigorate them and its mighty diapason soothe them? But while the heart is touched and our sympathies are quickened at the sufferings of these women,

and while it is easy to be charitable and philanthropic with regard to them, what new condemnation can be brought against the social conditions and the sanitary conditions under which they live and work? To me it seems rank absurdity, savouring almost of national insanity, that a country like ours, knowing what we know, and fearing what we fear, should tolerate them. We have endless and learned talk about 'germs'; microbes are sought for and classified; sanitation is reduced to a science; isolation in fever or small-pox cases is rigidly insisted on. Yet in hundreds of fœtid and pestilential dens a thousand and one articles of every-day use for the personal comfort or gratification of every section of the community and for every period of life are made. But Nature knows no pity, break her laws, and she arises and smites you when and where you least expect it. As we sow we shall and must reap. And I would like to force it upon the mind of the nation that, if we continue to make our blouses, shirts, children's pinafores, and babies' clothing, our fur jackets and our cheap mantles, our tooth-brushes, corsets, match-boxes, and artificial flowers in the mansions of misery, in the dens of disease and death, then of a verity weeping and wailing and the voice of mourning shall be heard in the land. Many must suffer, but they may be the innocent. So kiss your darlings. Your first-born, proud young mothers, put their pretty hats or bonnets on their sweet little heads; but if you had but one glimpse of the room in which they were made fear and trembling would take hold upon you. Hold up your heads, brave young men, adjust your smart neckties; but if you saw the rooms in which they were made and the fingers that made them you would drop them into the fire with a pair of tongs. Here is a letter dated April 18, 1901:

'Sir,

'Pardon the liberty I am taking, but having read what you said about poor women working fourteen hours a day for ten shillings per week, I beg to state my case. I am a tie-maker who,

after working all the week, cannot earn more than five shillings, and I have a poor afflicted husband to keep who hasn't earned a penny for more than ten years.'

Curiosity led me to that room, and though I had some difficulty in squeezing myself into it, I was very soon glad to get out of it. There he lay on a miserable bed, by no means clean. I had to sit on the side of that bed, and I felt uneasy. It was partially covered with ties or silk for making them, and he lay there with his decaying lungs, every few minutes his cough troubling him. I did not stay long, but long enough to see his wife three times put down her work to raise his head that he might with difficulty expectorate.

Again :

'SIR,

'I see you are going to help Women Home Workers. I have begged two shillings from poor friends, and send it to you, for my wife is one of them. I have been ill for two years, and as I watch my wife at her work night and day, and know how little she gets for it, I feel more than I can tell.'

No address was given, so I never saw the room, but the fact remains that for two years he had lain there ill, while 'home work' was continually around him.

I have been in rooms and seen sometimes sick or dying children, sometimes a dead child, where clothing for other children was being made night and day; I have breathed, or, rather, swallowed, the close, heavy, sickening atmosphere, and come away feeling faint, but wondering into what homes the garments being made would go, and how the children would fare that wore them. Ay, I thought, too, of the old words, 'Rachel weeping for her children because they are not.' The bodies of the poor folk who are engaged in these 'home industries' are of necessity but poor bodies, so frightfully ill-nourished that they fall an easy prey to all kinds of disease—not only to chest complaints and fevers, but to all forms of

disease; skin diseases especially abound. The ill-nourished and sickly plant develops parasites; the ill-nourished human does precisely the same. The weaker the animal life, the more it becomes the prey of the myriads of relentless foes, seen and unseen, that are greedily waiting for it; while filthy air and water, vile rooms and insanitary accommodation, dirty bodies, endless work, and hopeless apathy all combine to make Home Workers a danger to the community.

I have no wish to raise any feelings of disgust; I am but stating bare truths that might be enlarged upon, but I forbear. Far be it from me to say one word that might divert an atom of sympathy from the poor; my heart is with them, and I know, as few can know, the difficulties that environ their lives. I know that it is impossible for them under their present conditions to be clean, decent, and healthy. None the less, I repeat that their dirt and misery are a national danger. But see how this question appeals to the two primal instincts of humanity: First to that touch of nature that makes all men kin, that leads men and women to sacrifice themselves that they way save others; and, secondly, to that instinct for self-preservation that is said to be Nature's first law. I would that we were true to either.

But I believe in the application of common-sense when difficulties are to be solved, and I love justice. So I want my last words to be practical. Why should this evil and danger exist at all? Its very presence proclaims our lack of thought. It need not exist. It ought not to exist. Consider the lives of these people. Do they work hard enough and hours enough? Far too hard and far too many hours everyone admits. Do they pay rent enough for the accommodation called their home? Most people will say far, far too much. Do they pay highly enough for their meagre quantities of wretched food? I may be told that the poor can get things very cheap nowadays. Can they? Come and see.

I was visiting in the home of a widowed match-box maker.

Her sister, who had a crippled husband, lived with her, and was also a match-box maker. This sister had gone with her broken-down perambulator to take a shilling's worth of finished boxes to the factory—the everlasting baby underneath, the boxes on top. A lady friend was with me. While she essayed to learn the art of box-making, I stood looking on till the sister match-box maker returned. Evidently there had been something wrong, for the woman was breathless, and when she recovered was a bit hysterical. 'What is the matter?' her sister asked. 'They gave me a bad shilling at the factory, and I did not find it out till I got half-way home.' 'What did you do?' 'I gave a boy a penny to mind the baby, and ran all the way back.' 'Did they change it for you?' In reply a genuine shilling was shown. But it was a near thing—a hair's-breadth escape from financial ruin.

How are those shillings spent? Again I say, come and see; for here is the housekeeping account of another widow living in the same neighbourhood, a blouse-maker. She had four children—a girl of twelve, a boy of nine, a crippled boy of seven, and a younger child. The girl, who was, of course, deputy mother, had been charged with stealing some food, which undoubtedly she took to give to her younger brothers. In my visitations I came across the widow's rent-book—five shillings weekly. Paid up to date. I found her wage-book with its pitiful tale of hard work and poor pay. I saw also the widow's housekeeping account and her expenditure of her last shilling. Here it is: 'Tea, ½d.; sugar, ½d.; bread, 1¼d.; margarine, 1d.; oil, 1d.; firewood, ½d.; and a bit of bacon.' When this story appeared in the press, I received 1,600 letters in a few days about the widow and her children, and England seemed to weep over them. By the aid of the *Daily Telegraph* we were enabled to open five banking accounts, and place them above the fear of poverty. But when that fear was gone, when the cupboard was full of good food for which the children no longer cried, the youngest boy died, for even a banking account could not

save him. And so it happened that a kind-hearted public clothed the family in mourning, paid the undertaker's bill and cemetery fees. Will the dark path of the destroyer ever prove a way of light to a social heaven? Some day, perhaps, when we have suffered more.

But to return to that widow's housekeeping account. A notable business man said to me: 'Do you know what strikes me most about that widow's housekeeping account?' I supposed the poverty of it. 'Not at all,' he said. 'It is the horrible and senseless waste it tells of! Do you suppose she gets a halfpennyworth of tea or sugar, or a pennyworth of margarine for her money? No. She loses on every purchase; she is bound to. The shopkeeper can't lose, so she must. Multiply the loss on that shilling by the number of shillings spent in a year. Why, it is frightful!' He went to the root of the matter at once. The poorer people are, the greater the cost of living; the more abject their poverty, and the greater their need of nourishing food, the dearer they have to pay for the barest necessities. Come into a marketing street in a poor neighbourhood toward midnight on Saturday, watch the butchers' shops, and you will see a poorly-clothed and miserable woman standing looking with wistful eyes at the meat. With a few hardly-earned coppers she has to provide some pretence of a Sunday dinner for her family. The joints are ticketed, and they are beyond even her dreams. She comes nearer and looks at the inferior pieces, and timidly inquires the price. Still too high. She looks again and again, until the butcher says, and not unkindly, 'Buy some of those nice pieces, ma'am?' Nice pieces! they have lain on the block all day, after being trimmed off foreign meat, ticketed English —bits of mutton and shreds of beef on which the wind has blown. On them the dust and dirt of the street has found a resting-place; flies have paid them a visit; dirty fingers of other speculative purchasers have turned them over again and again. She finds her coppers, gets one pound and a half of

the pieces, and takes them to her own home—her one room, her larder and bedroom, workshop and kitchen, in which the whole family sleeps—and on the Sunday makes an inviting stew: But there are plenty who fare worse than this, and to whom even the 'pieces' would be a Godsend, to whom even a bit of 'macadamized cheese' would represent luxury, and whose children from very birth are fed with material that would test the stomach of a dog or an ostrich. Can this go on, and the nation be free from the penalty? Impossible! and the penalty is paid all round. Now, I have no wish for all difficulties to be removed from the lives even of the poor. Life without difficulty would be a poor thing, and hardly worth the living. But I do claim that the poorest, the hardest worked of all London's toilers, should have the possibility of living in decency, cleanliness, and some degree of comfort, and be able to obtain clean and nourishing food. And it can be done—I know it can be done. But it can only be by organization and combination, without which it will be for ever impossible for the Home Workers to get value for their money. I have had glimpses of a promised land, and in my fancy have seen the Home Workers organized and living in sweet content —organized, not for strikes or lock-outs, but for health, virtue, happiness; not in filthy slums enveloped with rank odours and moral and physical corruption; near the town, but a little way out, where the free air of heaven can enter their lungs and the silence of the country speak to them; in their communities, where each family had its suite of rooms, and each suite of rooms its bath-room; where children had rounded limbs and merry hearts; where brave boyhood and sweet girlhood ripened and matured; where poor women hovered not at midnight for scraps of dirty meat, and where the miserable items—tea, ½d.; sugar, ½d.—were no longer known, for they had their own stores. Some day we shall enter this promised land in which the jerry-builder shall not enter, and in which nothing that is unclean or maketh a lie shall be found. And when we

enter it we shall hear the deep roar of the nation as it rolls its heavy curse on the buried past. We shall feel that the heart of England is lighter, the hand of the oppressor has been stayed. Then the mothers of England will buy clothing for their darlings without fear. No nameless terrors will haunt the dainty brush, neither will men or women's clothing convey contagion, or the smart necktie disseminate the seeds of death.

For all these things will be made in light and cleanliness, and the brand of shame will be no longer upon them. Then the pioneers of the Empire at the ends of the earth will be no longer sad when their hearts, touched by remembrance, vibrate to the magnet of their soul, their old country and home. For in the circuit of the sun gladness and joy shall be felt in the knowledge that the poorest of the poor in the world's greatest city have a chance for health and virtue, for peace and comfort.

THE END

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